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Newspaper Readership and Community Ties

By Robert L. Stevenson

HIGHLIGHTS: This survey looks at how community ties lead to various psychological needs which are the motivations for newspaper reading. Three distinct audience segments are identified:

- the traditional newspaper audience, with strong, permanent bonds to the community, whose need for information, guidance and community surveillance leads to reading hard news, editorials and background features
- more mobile readers, less tied to the community, who use the newspaper for entertainment and as a guide to leisure opportunities
- peripheral readers, with few contacts to the community, who use the newspaper to maintain vicarious links with the community and to fill time which is not taken up by demands of family, job and community activities.

and

Precision Journalism: Coming of Age

By Arnold H. Ismach

HIGHLIGHTS: Precision journalism—the use of social science research methods by editors and reporters—includes a wide spectrum of activity. This article reviews the origins of precision journalism, offers examples of past and future applications in the newsroom and outlines how any newspaper can begin using these reporting techniques.

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Newspaper Readership and Community Ties

By Robert L. Stevenson

This project was conducted under a grant from the ANPA News Research Center to Stevenson and Jane D. Brown, both assistant professors of journalism at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Fieldwork for the survey was handled by Knight Publishing Co., Charlotte, N.C., under the direction of Michael Kleibrink, director of marketing research, who also contributed to the design of the project.

Most studies of newspaper readership have been largely descriptive: who reads what? While useful, such an approach does not focus directly on the important question of *why* some people read certain parts of the newspaper while others ignore those parts in favor of other content. And it does not explain why some people ignore the local newspaper entirely.

Newspaper reading—like television viewing and radio listening—is a routine part of most people's lives. And while the habit of newspaper reading often is acquired early in life, changes can occur later.

Most of the recent ANPA studies begin with an assumption that media use is related to a set of psychological needs that reading satisfies. We read a newspaper, of course, for the news, but newspapers also serve as entertainment for some people; others use the newspaper to keep in touch with the community; and for some, the newspaper is a convenient way to pass time. In this study, we look at various kinds of ties to the community—home, work, neighborhood and leisure—which seem to produce the psychological needs which in turn lead people to seek out specific parts of the newspaper.

The study, a telephone survey of adults in the Charlotte, N.C., metropolitan area, found that while regular newspaper readership is largely a function of experience with the newspaper as a child, changes do occur among a minority. For this small group, somewhat more are likely to stop rather than start reading newspapers. However, many non-readers are willing to give the newspaper another try when they move to a new city or when problems with circulation service or content are solved.

Three broad reader segments were identified.

- The heart of the newspaper audience continues to be people with strong and permanent ties to the community who look for information and guidance to use in maintaining civic links. Such people are heavy consumers of traditional news, opinion and background features.

- Other readers, often young and mobile, have few permanent ties to the community and more interest in using the newspaper as entertainment and as a means of maintaining casual surveillance of those aspects of the community which are of interest. This group responds well to some of the new entertainment and lifestyle features.

- A third segment is made up of people, often old, who use the newspaper to maintain vicarious ties to the community and simply to fill time in a life that contains few other demands. These people frequently are the heaviest readers of some of the traditional features like social news and religion.

Methodology

Data were collected in telephone interviews with 499 adults randomly selected in the metropolitan area of Charlotte, N.C. Telephone numbers were generated by a random digit dialing technique, and respondents were selected within each household by a random technique, as well. The interviewing was done in May 1978. The survey was carried out by the School of Journalism, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, with the cooperation of Knight Publishing Co., publishers of The Charlotte Observer and The Charlotte News.

Past and Present Readership

In a previous study (ANPA News Research Report No. 7, "The Frequency of Newspaper Readership," Oct. 21, 1977), we concluded that media use "seems to be largely a habit learned early in life." In this study we looked at the shifts in readership over time. Current regular readers were asked if they had ever stopped reading and why they later resumed. Non-regular readers were asked if they had ever been regular readers and why they had stopped.

The largest part of the sample (71 percent) were—and continue to be—regular readers, while only 8 percent have always been non-readers. The remaining 21 percent of the sample were people who changed at some time in the past. Eight percent changed from non-reader to reader, but 13 percent of the sample were readers who dropped out.

This 13 percent were asked why they had stopped reading:

• 35 percent	**Lack of time or convenience**
• 15 percent	**Circulation problems**
• 15 percent	**Change of location**
• 13 percent	**Dissatisfaction with content of newspaper**
• 8 percent	**Loss of health, sight**
• 14 percent	**Other reasons or no answer**

The even smaller number (8 percent) of gained readers were asked why they had begun to read regularly:

37 percent	Change of location
14 percent	Circulation improvement
11 percent	More time available
6 percent	Content improved
6 percent	Health or sight improved
26 percent	Other reasons or no answer

These percentages illustrate the familiar problems of circulation service and competition with other activities. But *they also demonstrate a reassuring willingness of non-readers to give a newspaper in a new community a chance or to give existing newspapers a second chance when circulation service or content improves.*

This study emphasizes again the importance of reliable delivery service. Earlier ANPA studies showed that dissatisfaction with delivery service was the most common reason for stopping a newspaper subscription. Even though newspaper reading is a casual activity which most people take for granted, it is psychologically important. When people set aside definite periods of time during the day for reading—such as at breakfast or as a break late in the afternoon—they expect the newspaper to be available when they want it. If the newspaper is routinely late or does not show up at all, it does not take people long to find other activities to substitute for newspaper reading.

Because of the importance of acquiring the newspaper habit early in life, the 63 percent of the respondents who said they remembered reading a newspaper as a child were asked what parts they read when they were young. Almost three out of four (71 percent) mentioned comics; sports and news were far less frequently cited but were about equal in attraction (22 percent to 21 percent); 23 percent mentioned other features or kinds of content.

The importance of these three types of content appealing to youth—comics, sports and news—is clear, both as an incentive to readership now and as a means of developing the readership habit for the future.

Motivation for Reading

While some of the gratifications derived from newspaper reading are obvious—learning about public affairs, for example—some are not so readily identified. Early studies during newspaper strikes found that many readers missed their newspaper because it was a companion, a way to fill empty time and a means of imposing regularity on their lives. Other media, of course, compete with newspapers to provide these same gratifications, and different people use a different mix of media to satisfy a wide range of psychological needs.

The Charlotte residents were given a list of reasons for reading newspapers and asked whether each reason was very important, somewhat important or not at all important to them. The proportions who said each need was *very important* were:

69 percent	To keep up with the news
50 percent	To keep in touch with the community
45 percent	To help in decisions like voting
23 percent	For entertainment
17 percent	To have something to talk about with others
9 percent	To pass the time of day
5 percent	To plan what to do each day

A study in Seattle (ANPA News Research Report No. 6, "Newspaper Use Among New Residents," Oct. 5, 1977) looked at media use in relation to "life space," the immediate social environment composed of home, neighborhood, community, work and leisure. In this survey, we looked at how the components of life space generate the diverse psychological needs that newspaper reading can satisfy.

We also looked at the connections between life space and what we call "community engagement," a broad term that encompasses the ties between individuals and their life space. Community engagement, of course, is closely related to age. As people enter responsible adulthood and acquire families, homes and permanent jobs, their ties to the community increase. And at that time we assume that their use of the newspaper both increases and changes. In a similar way, community engagement decreases as children mature and leave home, and as people retire from work and active involvement in neighborhood affairs. At that point, too, we expect newspaper use to diminish somewhat and to change as people become less of an active participant in their community and more of an indirect observer.

It is clear that the newspaper is different things to different people (see table). It also is clear that the newspaper continues to be, above all, a *news*paper, a source of information and community ties that serves the needs of a broad spectrum of the public. *The information function of the newspaper serves people with strong involvement with the community, people who expect to remain in the community and people who are interested in and involved in the community and nation. It is this audience segment that is and will continue to be the major component of the newspaper audience.*

But not everyone is actively engaged in community affairs, and not everyone looks to the newspaper as a source of information and a mechanism for maintaining community ties. The entertainment function of the newspaper is again demonstrated in these interviews. It is important to note that the people who do not use the newspaper to gratify news needs are most likely to use it for entertainment. *Entertainment-oriented readers are important to newspapers because they*

Table

Percentage of Survey Respondents Citing Each Reason for Reading Newspapers as "Very Important"

	Keep up with the news	Help in decisions like voting	Keep in touch with the community	Entertainment	Plan what to do each day	Have something to talk about with others	Pass the time
Community Affairs							
Voting in local elections							
Almost always	75	57	58	24	4	18	11
Occasionally	69	41	53	25	7	16	6
Seldom	59	32	36	23	7	17	6
Interest in local politics							
Very	83	57	63	31	6	21	9
Somewhat	69	47	51	20	4	15	8
Not very, not at all	57	32	40	21	6	18	9
Time away from home yesterday for leisure							
Yes	80	60	70	40	10	32	15
No	68	43	49	18	4	12	8
Expect to be here next year?							
Yes	70	46	51	23	4	17	9
No	53	29	53	35	24	29	0
Expect to be here in five years?							
Yes	70	44	52	21	4	18	10
No	56	46	41	36	10	15	3
National politics							
Voting in national elections							
Almost always	74	54	55	24	4	17	9
Occasionally	64	43	53	17	6	15	9
Seldom	60	25	35	26	9	20	8
Interest in national politics							
Very	83	58	57	29	5	19	9
Somewhat	66	46	50	19	4	17	8
Not very, not at all	53	25	41	23	5	15	9
Early newspaper use							
Newspaper in home as child							
Yes	71	51	54	25	4	16	7
No	64	30	39	18	7	21	12
Read newspaper as child							
Yes	73	51	55	26	4	16	8
No	51	49	46	13	5	26	3
Used newspaper in school							
Yes	70	52	54	27	5	18	9
No	68	37	47	18	5	17	9
Personal							
Married	68	48	51	20	4	17	7
Single	70	41	49	29	7	18	12
Job satisfaction							
Very satisfied	68	46	48	26	4	17	6
Somewhat	71	49	51	21	3	18	4
Not very, not at all	56	63	38	38	6	25	19

Note on interpretation: 75 percent of the survey respondents who almost always vote in local elections also cite "keeping up with the news" as a very important reason for reading the newspaper. In contrast, only 59 percent of those who seldom vote in local elections cite this reason for reading the newspaper as "very important" to them.

represent the best opportunity to expand readership. People already tied into the community are already regular readers for the most part, but the people who use the newspaper for entertainment often are not. But they can be attracted to the newspaper with a careful blend of material suited to their needs.

The newspaper is more than information and entertainment even though these are the major uses of the daily newspaper. *The newspaper is for some people a way to organize their life, a way to pass time, a source of information for small talk. These functions serve a relatively small but diverse audience segment.* For the elderly without strong personal ties to the community, the newspaper can be a surrogate, maintaining links that were once held by job, family and community activities. For such people, the newspaper can also be used to pass time and regulate life, providing the same psychological satisfactions that once were taken care of by the demands of family and community.

In a curious way, these individuals who are isolated from the community by a lack of engagement with it are similar to some young people—young people who are not well-educated or affluent, not interested in the newspaper as entertainment or as a catalog of leisure-time opportunities. Instead, these young people have few interests in either the news or entertainment content of the newspaper and tend to use it, like many elderly, to maintain tenuous and passive ties to the community and to fill time for which community responsibilities and leisure activities do not compete. They, more than any other group, are where newspaper readership has suffered, not from competition from television but from a lack of interest in or ties to the immediate community. If newspapers can expect youthful entertainment-oriented readers to shift their use of the newspaper to regular readership of traditional news as they develop stronger ties to the community, they cannot expect the same of this isolated youth segment made up of people whose limited, casual use of all media is not likely to increase or to evolve into regular newspaper readership.

Media Use and Readership

The psychological needs which newspaper reading gratifies and the individual and social factors which produce them are of interest, of course, mainly because they lead to differences in newspaper reading—differences which editors and publishers can use to produce an editorial package that can maximize readership among all of the diverse groups which make up the potential newspaper audience in a large community.

Instead of asking about readership of specific news stories or categories of news—national affairs, sports, etc.—we tried to define different packages of news and features that editors could put together to appeal to specific readership segments. Some of the packages are familiar—brief summaries of national and world events, background and interpretation, opinions and opposing viewpoints. But others are typical of the new, expanded editorial packages that many newspapers are using successfully to reach new readers, packages that could be presented as special sections or pages on personal finance, health, recreation and so on.

Respondents were told: *"Here is a list of different kinds of articles that appear in the newspaper. Using a 10-point scale where 10 represents the highest possible interest and one represents the lowest possible interest, tell me how interested you are in reading each of these."*

From previous experience with the scale, we can classify as likely readers those people who rate a particular editorial item nine or 10. The proportion of metropolitan Charlotte residents likely to read the various packages are:

• 36 percent	**National and world news summaries—a quick rundown of the most important news events reported in this country and other parts of the world**
• 35 percent	**Interesting people—stories about unusual people and their activities, including historical features, daily life in different parts of the world and interesting aspects of the local community**
• 34 percent	**Medical advice columns, exercise tips, a guide to finding health care services and stories on health problems**
• 32 percent	**Where to find different types of merchandise, a guide to outlet stores, tips on where to get the best service on repairs and evaluation of merchandise carried by local merchants**
• 24 percent	**Local news summaries—a short listing of police and fire calls, court cases and brief summaries of what local government agencies are doing**
• 24 percent	**Information on the latest sporting events, including scores and stories about sports personalities**
• 21 percent	**News about today's living, fashions, personal-advice columns and social events**
• 19 percent	**Information on various types of do-it-yourself projects including home decorating, hobbies, auto and household repair**
• 19 percent	**Topics on when to plant and how to care for your lawn and garden**
• 18 percent	**Stories on how people manage their money, how to save and how people in the area spend their money**
• 18 percent	**Stories about local religious activities and personalities plus information on various types of religion**
• 17 percent	**Stories about local recreational sports leagues, children's sports and other recreational activities**

• 16 percent	Stories about local entertainment, personalities and places to go, and a calendar of events
• 14 percent	Longer stories covering the background of major issues in the news, the people involved and a broad perspective or why these issues are important
• 12 percent	Stories presenting different viewpoints about important issues and arguments for and against different sides
• 2 percent	Stories about activities of local garden, bridge, civic and other social clubs

The reading interests of our respondents reinforce earlier findings about the importance of news in the newspaper. But "news" also includes feature material. The blend of hard news and human interest features developed over the years continues to serve readers well. Most of the newer content packages listed above rate moderate or low readership (medical news is an obvious exception). Of course, they can appeal to small but important audience segments and can help bring marginal readers into the newspaper's regular audience.

This survey also highlights the information and entertainment value of advertising. The newspaper's commercial information—advertising and editorial content about goods and services available in the community—is an important bridge uniting the three audience segments. Both advertising and consumer-oriented editorial matter rate high among most subgroups of readers. In addition, stories about consumer goods and services—the kind of material to which many newspapers are now giving extra emphasis—appeal particularly to the casual reader who uses the newspaper for entertainment and to pass time.

Implications

The use of newspapers is largely a practice learned in childhood, but changes do take place later in life. Unfortunately for newspapers, the gain in readers from the ranks of non-readers is offset by the loss of once-regular readers. However, the loss is not irreversible. Lost readers show an encouraging willingness to give newspapers a second chance when they move to a new city or when dissatisfaction with a newspaper's circulation or content is eliminated. The steady flow of new arrivals into most metropolitan areas is an important source of potential new readers. Also important are former subscribers who might be responsive to a newspaper's efforts to improve circulation and content.

It can be seen from this study that the stable segment of the community—those with the most secure ties to it—are the heart of the newspaper audience. Their community ties motivate them to use the newspaper for information, for political guidance and for surveillance of the social environment. And these needs, in turn, lead to a heavy readership of the newspaper's traditional hard news, editorials and background. Newspapers can strengthen their service to this important segment of their reading audience by improving the quality of their news coverage.

But newspapers are—and always have been—sources of entertainment, as well. And this study suggests that the readers who seek out the newspaper as entertainment are often quite different kinds of people. They typically have neither the ties nor the commitment to the community. But they are interested in entertainment, shopping and other opportunities in the community, and their reading interests reflect this. It is this audience segment to which newspapers can profitably direct lifestyle sections and other new content packages.

The third set of needs which motivate people to seek out the newspaper is less-related to the newspaper's content than to its use to pass time, to plan activities and to prepare for small talk. Their reading interests are diverse and in some cases shared with other segments. But they are also above average in some of the content areas which have not been given a fresh look in many newspapers—religion, social news and food. It is possible that special attention to these parts of the newspaper could improve circulation among this hard-to-reach segment of the population. ■

Precision Journalism: Coming of Age

By Arnold H. Ismach

Ismach is an associate professor and chairman of the news-editorial program at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, University of Minnesota. He was a reporter and editor on newspapers in Washington and southern California for 15 years before entering journalism education.

Each October, the Japanese celebrate a holiday that hasn't yet gained a foothold in the United States: Statistics Day. There are probably no other people in the world with a greater passion for statistics than the Japanese. But if Americans aren't yet ready to declare a national holiday in honor of numbers, there are signs of a developing romance.

Since World War II, government, business and education have been producing an avalanche of statistics, the product of a research explosion made possible by the advent of the electronic computer. One outlet for this profusion of numbers, as it is for most other social phenomena, is the press. But until the 1970s, the news media themselves didn't contribute much to the research stockpile. That's beginning to change.

The research goes by the name of "precision journalism"—the use of social science research methods by reporters—and it includes a broad landscape of inquiry. Studies have ranged from simple voter preference polls to sophisticated sociological and psychological surveys and field experiments. Some news organizations have developed their own trained staffs to conduct local studies. Others have relied on academic researchers for guidance or employed commercial organizations.

Survey research, of course, isn't a totally new venture for the press. The first recorded pre-election polling was conducted by newspapers in the presidential campaign of 1824.[1] Some newspapers have dabbled for decades in "man-on-the-street" and straw polls—and some still do. But newsroom research efforts today generally go far beyond those activities in sophistication and significance. What prompted the sudden growth of precision journalism in a business whose practitioners pride themselves on being "word people," not numbers merchants?

As with most change, there is probably an array of reasons. One of the most basic is the advent of high-speed computing, making possible the quick processing of large amounts of information. Another is need—journalists find themselves confronted with an increasingly complex society, one which doesn't yield easily to traditional reporting methods. Questions are being asked for which conventional sources don't have answers, despite the awesome output of research findings from most sectors of society. Often, the answers come too late for the time-frame of journalism. If the press is to provide answers, it has to develop data on its own.

The catalyst for precision journalism was a reporter with the Washington Bureau of Knight Newspapers. Philip Meyer had studied quantitative research methods at Harvard University under a Nieman Fellowship, an interest prompted by unsuccessful attempts to predict election results in Ohio in 1962 and 1964.

Meyer established the modern bench mark for inhouse research by news organizations in 1967. Shortly after the ghetto riots in Detroit that year, he persuaded his editors that a study of the attitudes of the rioters might be revealing. With funding from the Detroit Urban League and technical assistance from the University of Michigan, Meyer put together a research team. A month later, the survey findings were in print. They indicated that, contrary to conventional wisdom, riot behavior was not the product of low education and income. Meyer went on from there to conduct a number of studies for the Knight newspapers, and in 1973 he published a book, *Precision Journalism*, which served as both guide and incentive for others.

Spurred by Meyer's pioneer work, journalism educators picked up the cue. Dr. Maxwell E. McCombs introduced precision journalism into reporting courses at the University of North Carolina in the early 1970s, and later at Syracuse University. The author of this article first offered a course in research methods for reporters in 1974 at the University of Minnesota. Since then, other major journalism schools have joined the movement. There also have been numerous workshops and seminars for working journalists.

The product of all this activity is seen with increasing frequency on the front pages of American newspapers, large and small. The Knight-Ridder newspapers, still guided by Meyer's expertise, are among the most heavily involve in news research projects, So are the Minneapolis Star and Tribune, where the Minnesota Poll has been a standard feature since the 1950s, and other special studies are conducted frequently. The Chicago Tribune, The Washington Post, the Milwaukee Journal and Sentinel, Los Angeles Times, The New York Times, The Toronto Star, the Des Moines (Iowa) Register and Tribune, The Charlotte (N.C.) Observer, the Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch, the Akron (Ohio) Beacon Journal and the Wilmington (Del.) News-Journal are among dozens of large news organizations that have made major commitments to precision journalism.

It's not exclusively an indulgence of metropolitan newspapers, either. A number of medium-sized and small dailies are involved in precision news research, some on a regular basis. One of the most active in the field has been the Dubuque (Iowa) Telegraph Herald. Others include the Davenport (Iowa) Quad-City Times, the Roanoke (Va.) Times & World-News and the Van Nuys (Calif.) News.

Both principal wire services also are producing survey-based stories, as are the major weekly news magazines and all three television networks. Not surprisingly, a growing number of college dailies and even high school newspapers are conducting polls and special studies.

Examples of Studies

Many of the projects undertaken are virtual carbon copies of syndicated opinion polls conducted by organizations such as Gallup and Harris. Newspapers thus obtain local comparisons to national sentiment or attempt to measure opinion on purely local issues. But some precision journalism studies go far beyond the simple, and often trivial, one-shot opinion polls.

- **The Milwaukee Journal, with the help of a branch of the University of Wisconsin, has published dozens of studies on subjects such as school desegregation attitudes and the experiences of burglary and robbery victims.**
- **The Philadelphia Inquirer, skeptical of claims by a district attorney that lenient judges were letting criminals go free, examined about 1,000 criminal case records. The computer-generated content analysis showed that failures in the procesutor's office were to blame, rather than lenient judges. It also showed that justice was a sometime thing in Philadelphia.**
- **The Minneapolis Star surveyed delegates to a political party nominating convention, gaining an accurate advance assessment of issues and candidate preferences. The Star also sampled voters on the night of a municipal election and had a story in the next evening's newspaper describing the factors that led to the election outcome. The Minneapolis Tribune achieved roughly the same goal with a 25-precinct model of the city.**
- **A New York Times survey after the 1976 presidential election concluded that a feeling of powerlessness, not disaffection with government, was the major cause of non-voting.**
- **The Dubuque Telegraph Herald questioned a sample of doctors in rural Iowa and developed a startling profile of an aging, overworked medical force.**
- **The Milwaukee Sentinel asked residents what they wanted in the way of medical care and health insurance, providing a useful set of priorities for policy planners.**
- **The Chicago Tribune, through a sample survey, discovered what metropolitan residents thought about the quality of life in their communities.**
- **The Washington Post, in cooperation with researchers at Harvard University, compared the perceptions of the public to those of organizational leaders on questions of equality and found wide disparities.**
- **The Roanoke Times & World-News employed a computer to probe the sources of election campaign contributions.**
- **The Richmond Times-Dispatch analyzed the likelihood of commuters' making greater use of bus transit.**
- **The Van Nuys News analyzed the content of local television news programming and found it wanting.**

The list could go on, but it would by no means exhaust the possibilities for significant, distinctive investigative reporting at the community level. What rules do local employers follow in the hiring, promotion and compensation of women? How do teenagers spend their time? How do lawyers view ethics in their profession? Are sentencing and bail applied even-handedly to minority groups in local courts? Do male and female office-holders differ in their views of government? What factors account for the quality of life in a community, and how have they changed in the last year, in the last 10 years?

The last question points to an opportunity all newspapers share, but on which none has yet capitalized. Assessments of community progress are made occasionally, but they are usually unsystematic and subjective. Statistics on employment, building permits, population growth and the like give only a partial picture of community health. The availability of statistics in a number of areas of social and economic interest could be used to produce a quality-of-life model for the community. These statistics, called social indicators, are readily available measures that may reflect other, more general, community attributes. For example, the proportion of live births may reflect the general level of medical care in the community; garden nursery sales may show civic pride; voter turnout may indicate citizenship.

By developing a model of a dozen or more indicators, a newspaper may be able to provide its readers with an annual assessment of where the community is and where it's heading. Such a "psycho-social weather report" is entirely feasible, based on the state of the art today.

Twin Benefits from Training

The sample survey, the computer assisted analysis of records, the experiment—these are the "active" uses of precision journalism.

However, there are other, less obvious but perhaps more important justifications for developing staff capability in precision journalism. These can be described as "reactive" uses, and they apply to every reporter and copyreader on the staff.

As government, business and other institutions make wider use of research in their own activities, more of that material is finding its way to newspaper city desks. Reporters on every beat must regularly cope with quantitative data and conclusions. The congressman releases the results of his constituents' poll. The consultant hired by the transit commission presents the findings of a survey on bus utilization. The county attorney offers data on caseload and staffing. The chamber of commerce sends out a release on consumer shopping patterns.

These are based, supposedly, on scientific research and statistical analysis. If reporters and editors are to interpret the material adequately, if they are to protect their readers from shoddy research or questionable analysis, they themselves must be familiar with at least the language of research. A journalism class last year examined the news content of 10 daily newspapers on randomly chosen days for a period of two weeks.[2] Students found that 19 percent of the stories had a quantitative research base—they involved statistics or were based on scientific studies. If that kind of volume is confronting journalists in their daily work, numbers obviously are as important as words in the training of news personnel.

Getting Started in News Research

What can editors and publishers do to get involved sensibly in precision journalism? The cost, staff time and formal training required for research naturally make it easier for metropolitan newspapers to enter the field. But smaller news organizations can get started with a modest investment. A good starting point would be to check with nearby journalism schools to see if they have, or are willing to start, courses in precision journalism, research methods and statistics. Any school with a graduate program in journalism is likely to have faculty members competent to teach these subjects. The school may be induced to develop a short course or workshop in precision journalism, given sufficient interest and support.

Staff members also will benefit from reading one or two books on the subject, designed specifically for journalists. One is Meyer's *Precision Journalism*,[3] which provides a full introduction to the field. Another is the *Handbook of Reporting Methods*, by Maxwell McCombs, Donald Shaw and David Grey.[4] Written as a textbook, it offers an excellent introduction to both traditional and quantitative reporting techniques. Each book has extensive references to other useful materials on the subject.

Once the decision is made to train staff members, the next step is consideration of developing a physical system for projects. Many newspapers now have the computer capability to process data for surveys or records studies. If not, local colleges or research firms can provide that support, for a fee. While most newspapers keep data processing as an in-house function, they tend to farm out survey interviewing tasks to professional firms. Interviewing costs are high: 300-400 telephone interviews may run $1,500-$2,000, and face-to-face interviews as much as four times that much. That's one reason that telephone interviews have become the method of choice in field surveys. (However, one telephone technique, which uses recorded questions rather than live interviewers, is generally frowned upon by research authorities.)

Surveys are, of course, just one approach to a research objective. Some study objectives don't involve people or interviews but instead use documentary materials. These studies, known in social science as content analyses, also require careful design. As in surveys, sampling methods must be applied to assure an unbiased selection of records that will be representative of the whole. Experiments used to good effect in some precision journalism projects also have special design considerations.

To get the benefit of the "scientific" dimension of precision journalism, which implies validity and reliability, projects must be designed and executed according to accepted practice. This implies formal knowledge of research methods, something certainly within the reach of today's journalist.

Expertise is filtering into more newsrooms, and greater sophistication is evident in both active and reactive uses of precision journalism. With computers now as common as water coolers in most newspaper plants, the trend is likely to continue. ■

Footnotes

[1] Tankard, James W. Jr., "Public Opinion Polling by Newspapers in the Presidential Election Campaign of 1824." *Journalism Quarterly*, 49:2 (Summer 1972) 361-65.

[2] The study was conducted by a class at the University of Minnesota, supervised by the author. Newspapers included in the study were The New York Times, Chicago Tribune, Los Angeles Times, Minneapolis Star and Tribune, The Milwaukee Journal, The Washington Post and three small Minnesota dailies, the Worthington Globe, Waseca Journal and Rochester Post-Bulletin.

[3] Myer, Philip, *Precision Journalism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973.

[4] McCombs, Maxwell, Donald L. Shaw and David Grey, *Handbook of Reporting Methods*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1976.

Opinion Poll Reporting

The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association recently published an eight-page booklet entitled "Reporting on Polls: Some Helpful Hints" for use by daily newspaper journalists.

It warns of the pitfalls awaiting the journalist who doesn't ask the right questions of the pollster or the research house on the methods used to gather the data; it also lists the questions which the journalist should ask.

This checklist of questions is not new—the American Association for Public Opinion Research produced it several years ago—but CDNPA's version also explains in lay terms why these questions should be asked.

The checklist questions are:

1. **Who sponsored the survey?**
2. **Who was interviewed? (What broad group of people is being described?)**
3. **How were the persons selected for interviews? (What was the sample design?)**
4. **How many persons were interviewed?**
5. **What was the response rate?**
6. **How accurate are the results?**
7. **Who were the interviewers?**
8. **How were the interviews conducted?**
9. **When were the interviews conducted?**
10. **What were the actual questions asked?**
11. **Is the headline or teaser accurate?**
12. **Is it clear when the results relate only to a part of the full sample?**

The CDNPA pamphlet also includes a mini-bibliography on the subject of polls and surveys and a mini-glossary of research terms.

Copies of the pamphlet are available on request from CDNPA, 321 Bloor St. East, Toronto, Ontario, M4W 1E7.

ANPA News Research Reports

are distributed to newspapers, news researchers, educators and other interested persons. To be placed on the distribution list or to obtain additional copies write:

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American Newspaper Publishers Association
The Newspaper Center
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Washington, D.C. 20041

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A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

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Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects

By David H. Weaver and Judith M. Buddenbaum

HIGHLIGHTS: A review of more than 100 studies on the uses and effects of newspapers and television finds substantial variations in the many uses and effects of these media. Both television and newspapers are used in a generally complementary manner, although they do compete with each other for diversionary time. Information loss seems to be greater from television than from newspapers, but there is a substantial loss of information from *both* newspaper and television news stories. Newspaper use is more strongly associated with voting turnout and other political activity than is television use.

and

Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business

By Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc.

HIGHLIGHTS: While a strong majority of the public feels that the news they get from newspapers and television is "biased," they tend to define that "bias" as an emphasis of bad news. Compared to other major communicators in our society, newspapers and other major media have relatively strong credibility. Among the public as a whole, no apparent distinction is made between the credibility of newspapers and that of TV news. However, among college students, newspapers have unusually strong credibility, while TV news does not. Among government officials, both newspapers and news magazines have slightly greater credibility than TV news.

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American Newspaper Publishers Association
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Allen H. Neuharth, Chairman and President Jerry W. Friedheim, General Manager
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Newspapers and Television: A Review of Research on Uses and Effects

By David H. Weaver
and
Judith M. Buddenbaum

David Weaver is an associate professor of journalism and director of the Bureau of Media Reserach at Indiana University. Judith Buddenbaum is a graduate student in the School of Journalism. Both authors have worked on various newspapers—Weaver primarily as an editor and Buddenbaum primarily as a reporter. This review of research literature was commissioned by the ANPA News Research Center.

The uses and effects of mass media have been systematically studied by hundreds of scholars in this country and others since the late 1920's.[47, 61, 62, 63] There are several reviews of such studies.[26, 41, 42, 48, 56, 57, 99, 112] But none have concentrated on the similarities and differences in the uses and effects of newspapers and television. In an effort to summarize what we know about these two important media, this review covers studies published since 1955 which look at the uses and/or effects of newspapers and television.

Findings in Brief

Review of the *uses* of television and newspapers finds that people value both television and newspapers and use both in a generally complementary manner for knowledge and diversion, and as an adjunct to interpersonal discussion. Although most people regularly use both television and newspapers, on any given day a person is more likely to read a newspaper than to watch televison *news*. Television typically is seen as fulfilling a more general-surveillance function while newspaper readership is associated with specific information seeking, in-depth knowledge about a subject and guidance at election time.

As a diversion, television and newspapers do compete with each other for the consumer's *time*, but people expect both to provide some entertainment. Only in the case of media use for escape does there seem to be a clear difference between television and newspapers. Persons who can be described as "alienated" are heavy viewers of fantasy-oriented television programming, but no correlation between alienation and newspaper use has been found.

The use of television as a substitute for other activities has been documented in several studies, but no studies were found on the use of newspapers as a substitute for interpersonal contacts. Use of both newspapers and television does seem to increase when people see the content as useful in conversations with others. Television seems to be favored by those who frequently *ask* others for information about a subject, while opinion *givers* seem to prefer newspapers.

In general, whites, males, persons with relatively high levels of education and high social and economic status say they prefer newspapers while blacks, females and persons of lower socioeconomic status say they are heavy television users.

As for the *effects* of newspapers and television, the studies reviewed here (mostly one-time surveys) suggest that exposure to newspapers is associated with reinforcement, rather than change, of pre-existing political attitudes. Exposure to television is somewhat more associated with the formation of new, short-term political attitudes and general political interest than is exposure to newspapers.

Newspapers seem to be more effective than television at increasing levels of political knowledge and at telling people what issues to be concerned about in a political campaign. And newspaper editorial endorsements of particular political candidates are associated with increased vote totals in elections, especially in non-partisan elections where there are few controversial issues.

A final conclusion suggested by studies of *political effects* of newspapers and television is that newspaper use is more strongly associated with voting turnout and other political activity than is television use.

Other conclusions suggested by the studies of *non-political effects* of newspapers and television are:

- Heavy television viewing—regardless of specific content—is associated with more distrust of other persons, more fear of the world in general, an exaggerated fear of being involved in violence and more dependence upon established authorities. Heavy newspaper exposure, on the other hand, is associated with less distrust of others, less fear of the world and less dependence upon established authorities. Heavy newspaper readers are also less likely to overestimate the number of persons involved in law enforcement than are heavy television viewers.
- Newspaper reading is associated with the formation of attitudes about topics which receive regular coverage in newspapers, but such coverage does not seem to have much systematic impact on the direction or the intensity of such attitudes.
- Newspaper exposure is associated with greater knowledge of topics covered in newspapers for both children and adults, and newspapers seem to be more effective at conveying detailed information than does television.
- Information loss seems to be greater from television than from newspapers, but there is a substantial loss of information (estimated at an average of 77 percent) from *both* newspaper and television news stories.

- There seems to be a stronger association between the amount of space devoted to a topic in a newspaper and recall of information about that topic, than between the amount of time devoted to a subject by television and recall of information about that subject.

- Learning from newspapers seems to vary with a person's level of education. The more educated seem to learn more, thus perpetuating existing inequities in knowledge between better-educated and less-educated persons.

- Television plays a major role in making people aware of important breaking news (such as the assassination of a President or a disaster involving large numbers of persons), with newspapers tending primarily to supplement television and radio reports of such news. Those who rely on television for *important* breaking news seem to miss more details than substance.

- Children tend to develop a "high affection" for television before becoming involved with print media. And non-readers and light readers of daily newspapers tend to have negative attitudes about reading and regard it as "work."

- Readers of a weekly newspaper are more likely to be readers of a daily newspaper than not, and readers of a daily newspaper are more likely to watch televison *news* and to belong to a community organization than are non-readers of a daily newspaper.

Methodology

The conclusions in this review are based on more than 100 studies on the uses and effects of newspapers and television which were conducted between 1955 and 1977. Most of the studies reported here were published in one of four leading journals in the field of mass communications research: *Journalism Quarterly, Journal of Broadcasting, Public Opinion Quarterly* and *Journal of Communication.*

In addition to these journals, ANPA News Research Reports and Bulletins were scanned, as well as some of the newspaper readership study abstracts on file at the ANPA News Research Center, Syracuse University. A few recent books and unpublished papers dealing with newspaper and television uses and effects were also included in this review.

Uses of Newspapers and Television

Conventional wisdom tells us, on the one hand, that television is primarily an entertainment medium while newspapers are for information—and, on the other hand, that the two media are in competition with each other for the same audience. While there is some truth in both observations, the picture that emerges from a review of mass communications research is of media audiences using both newspapers and television for knowledge, diversion and as an adjunct to interpersonal communication in a way that is more complementary than competitive.

For Knowledge

Of these three main uses, the use of television and newspapers for knowledge is the most thoroughly researched. However, to better understand both the complementary and competitive relationships between these media, we will subdivide this use for knowledge into surveillance, specific information seeking and guidance.

Diffusion studies by Budd, MacLean and Barnes[15] following significant news events indicate that, in general, one medium will be the source of awareness and the other will then be used for more specific information. However, which medium will fall into the surveillance category and which into the specific information-seeking category will be determined by a number of factors, including the time of occurrence of the event, the location of the audience at the time of the news break and the salience of the event.

For example, following a relatively *low-salience* event such as President Eisenhower's decision to run for re-election, Danielson[24] determined that although people who learned about the event from television heard about it much faster than those who learned about it from newspapers, more people learned about it from newspapers than from television. Following a *medium-salience* event such as George McGovern's decision to drop Thomas Eagleton from the 1972 Democratic ticket,[83] and a *high-salience* event like the John F. Kennedy assassination,[35] television is much more likely to be the first news source; but after hearing of the event, people generally turn to another medium for further information.

When the subject studied is routine daily news instead of a major news event, a similar pattern emerges. Studies by Stone[103] and Wade and Schramm[110] showed that most people consider television their most important news source—with newspapers their second choice —but this preference is not a case of "either/or." A study conducted by Ehrenberg, Goodhardt and Haldane[29] concerning duplication of viewing found that there is no special audience for television news and that viewing television news is not correlated with watching other public affairs programming. Other studies by Bogart[9] and Robinson[97] indicate that on any given day a person is much less likely to turn on television *news* than to read a newspaper.

Television news is used more for surveillance, and newspapers are used more for in-depth information. A study of television news recall by Neuman[81] showed that the audience consists primarily of casual viewers, while a study by Grotta, Larkin and DePlois[40] found that readers of small daily newspapers (circulation approximately 5,000) use them for local news and advertising and turn to television for national and international news. Metropolitan newspapers are seen by these readers as providing an additional source of news for those persons wanting more complete information.

For specific information, newspapers are generally the first choice. During an election campaign, Vinyard and Sigel[109] found that 98 percent of their respondents read at least one newspaper daily, and 87 percent watched television news and public affairs programs. Newspapers were rated the most important source for keeping informed.

For information about medicine and science, Wade and Schramm[110] found a similar complementary pattern, with newspapers being the primary source and television seen as a supplementary source. In a study of medical information, however, Wright[118] found that television and newspapers are used about equally, but respondents feel newspapers provide the most useful information. Most medical school faculty members surveyed by Shaw and Van Nevel[101] occasionally found new information about their specialties in the mass media, with 92 percent of that information contained in newspapers and in general magazines.

In a more general study of sources of science news, Swinehart and McLeod[105] found that before the launching of Sputnik, newspapers were the primary source of science news—but that following the launch, television increased in importance and replaced newspapers as the main news source for some groups.

Although many studies, particularly those of children, document some increase in knowledge following general non-news television use, studies documenting the deliberate use of general television content for knowledge purposes are practically nonexistent. Wright[118] found that people mention dramatic medical shows as a *not*-very-useful source of medical information, and Katzman[51] suggested that viewers of soap operas learn how to face life and handle certain kinds of interpersonal problems from their favorite shows; but this is not necessarily the same thing as watching such content in order to learn from it.

No studies included in the scope of this review dealt with the use of newspaper comic pages, filler material or other "non-news" items for knowledge purposes.

In addition, use of newspapers and television for guidance has not been well-researched. No studies concerning television were found in this review, and newspapers have been studied only in connection with elections. Vinyard and Sigel[109] found that 60 percent of Detroit registered voters surveyed depended greatly on newspaper endorsements for local candidate selection but relied less heavily on endorsements for state and national candidates. Surveying newspaper subscribers and voters in Oregon, Rarick[86] found that 42.2 percent would take newspaper advice on a local bond issue, but only 32.8 percent would take that advice in a presidential election. The same study indicated that women are more influenced than men by editorials on issues outside the home, while men are more influenced than women by editorials on domestic matters. But whether either sex turns to editorials for specific guidance in matters beyond elections is not clear.

For Diversion

According to Robinson,[90] the average person devotes 28 percent (or 92 minutes daily) of all leisure time exclusively to television, 7 percent to newspapers and an additional 36 minutes daily to other leisure activities while also watching television as a secondary activity. Although all of this is "diversion" in the sense that it is time spent outside the confines of the normal working day, these totals include media use for knowledge and as an adjunct to interpersonal communication, as well as for the strictly diversionary purposes of entertainment, escapism and time passing.

As diversionary activities, television and newspapers clearly compete with each other for audience *time* even though their contents are not strictly competitive.

Studies from the early years of television conducted by Hamilton and Lawless[43] indicate that the chief reason for wanting television, and one of the chief values to those having it, was as a cheap form of entertainment. In a somewhat later study, Mehling[74] asked respondents which mass medium they would keep if they could have only one. Of the 52 percent who selected television, 53 percent mentioned "entertainment" and 40 percent "variety" as their reason. By comparison, 26 percent selected newspapers—but of those, only 25 percent mentioned either "entertainment" or "variety" as the reason for their choice.

Although television, particularly during daytime hours and prime time, offers many programs that are usually classified as entertainment and newspapers carry such entertainment features as comics, crossword puzzles and certain columns, the question of exactly what content people use when they want to be entertained has not received much study.

Working with a convenience sample of children aged 6 to 12, Streicher and Bonney[104] found that most made a distinction between their regular viewing and programs from which they could "learn something." For entertainment, boys preferred cartoons, drama and fantasy, while the top choices for girls were situation comedies, drama and cartoons.

Schramm, Lyle and Parker[96] found that soon after children learn to read, they begin turning to newspapers to read the comics. This use continues even after they develop an interest in other content.

That adults expect to be entertained by mass media is documented by a number of studies dealing with political content. Cranston[23] notes that soon after telecasts of political conventions began, entertainment became a part of the format as a way of holding audience attention; Kelley[52] points out that a proportion of the audience for campaign debates comes from those who are interested in the "game" aspect of elections; and Atkin and others[6] found that people's attitudes toward candidates at least partially depend on the entertainment value of the candidates' commercials.

In a study of television viewing across the Canadian-American border, Sparkes[102] found that Canadian viewers turn to U.S. television primarily for entertainment, and United States viewers turn to Canadian stations to supplement local offerings, particularly of sports.

Katz and Foulkes[50] state that mass media may serve for individual retreat or for keeping "close" to desired others, but that no particular medium is associated with escapism. They further caution that "escape" content does not function as "escape" for everyone using it and suggest that, therefore, the term "escape" should apply to consequences rather than to a pattern of use.

However, Pearlin[84] found a relationship between stressful experiences and escape viewing, while studies of alienation by McLeod, Ward and Tancill[73] and Sargent and Stempel[95] found that those who can be described as "alienated" spend more time with television, especially its fantasy content, and apparently use television as an escape medium. No correlation was found between alienation and newspaper readership.

Television and newspapers can both serve as a mechanism for passing time. Mehling[74] found that 2 percent of those who selected television as the one medium they would keep and 2 percent of those who selected newspapers gave "time killing" as their reason. Neuman[81] in his study of television news recall found that 12 percent of television news viewers surveyed watch in order to relax, and Davis[25] determined that one function of television for older adults is to divide the day into meaningful segments.

For Communication

As an adjunct to interpersonal communication, television and newspapers may be used in three ways: to keep people close together, to substitute for personal relations and to provide something to talk about.

Hamilton and Lawless[43] found that "keeping the family at home" was the most important reason for having a television set and the second-most important reason for wanting one, and Merrill[76] determined that children under five watch televison most frequently after 7 p.m. when they can be with other family members.

In a study of leisure activities, Meyersohn[77] found that most heavy viewers also participate in other forms of recreation including people-oriented activities, such as visiting, but that higher income people who are heavy viewers do not engage in many other leisure activities. Like the elderly persons surveyed by Davis,[25] they apparently turn to television for companionship.

Several studies document an increase in television and newspaper use when people see the social utility of this activity. For college students, Atkin[4] determined that the number of newspapers read and the time spent reading newspapers and magazines is positively correlated with the number of groups in which news is discussed. Troldahl and Van Dam[108] found that persons who frequently give opinions or ask for information are more likely to use several media than are those who seldom talk about the news. Givers and askers differ from each other in their media selection, with more opinion *givers* reading newspapers and more *askers* watching television. Radio and magazine use is very similar for both groups. Among senior citizens, Graney and Graney[33] found that television use is positively correlated with telephone use and attendance at meetings.

Who Uses Newspapers and Television

Clearly, both newspapers and television can be used for knowledge, diversion and as an adjunct to interpersonal communication. The total time and attention devoted to either medium, as well as the amount of that time and attention that will be devoted to any one of the uses, depend on the individual. But these differences frequently can be predicted from demographic and attitudinal characteristics.

In general, persons with higher incomes and more education are more likely to read newspapers than are those with lower levels of education and income, who generally devote more time to television.

Williams and Lindsay[113] found that time spent with newspapers and television is more closely correlated with social stratification than with age, sex or race. Although this study showed little difference in source of "important news" for persons classified as "influential," "social workers" and "clients," major differences were found in the amount of time devoted to newspapers and television.

Among the "influentials," 90 percent read a newspaper every day, but only 6 percent watched more than three hours of television. Among the "clients," the figures were 53 percent and 39 percent, respectively. "Social workers" were intermediate in their media habits.

A similar study by Greenberg and Dervin[37] found that low-income persons are much more likely to rely on television as a source of world and local news, and they are much less likely to use newspapers for that information. Wade and Schramm[110] reported that television is the source of news for most people during a national election campaign, but newspapers are preferred by highly educated, professional and white collar workers, and by high-income groups.

Considering education as a predictor separate from socioeconomic status, Vinyard and Sigel[109] found that reliance on multiple media increases as education increases; but Kline[56] and Samuelson, Carter and Ruggels[94] reported that as education levels increase, the total amount of time spent with media decreases. Much of this decrease comes at the expense of the diversionary content of television.

Considering race as a predictor of media use, Allen[1] and McCombs[68] found that television is more important for blacks than for whites; but studies by Sharon[100] and by Williams and Lindsay[113] suggest that most media differences between the races are more closely correlated with socioeconomic status than with race itself. Furthermore, work by Williams, Dordick and Horstmann[114] suggests that ethnic subgroup and community standards, as well as economic conditions, may be responsible for differences that are usually reported as racial.

In the area of newspaper readership, racial differences persist even when controls are applied for socioeconomic status. Bogart[11] found that newspaper readership for blacks and whites follows generally the same pattern by sex, age and income—with the exception that it falls off more sharply among blacks with very low income and those with less than a college educaton. Sharon[100] determined that whites read more of all kinds of printed matter than do blacks, regardless of economic status, and that this difference is particularly apparent in newspaper readership. Among those of both races who do read newspapers, blacks read less of the editorials, society pages and regular advertisements and more sports and television-radio listings than do whites.

Sex is usually one of the demographic characteristics used to predict newspaper and television use; however, like race, it is unsatisfactory when considered apart from education and economic status. Greenberg[36] found that women prefer television to newspapers as a news source, but work by Wade and Schramm[110] and Kraus, Mehling and El-Assal[58] suggests that this pattern is reversed for women with high education levels. Furthermore, results obtained by Rarick[86] indicating that women tend to be home- and family-oriented in their newspaper reading—while men are more oriented toward matters outside the home—may be more a function of time spent at home than of innate sexual differences. By way of comparison, Katzman[51] determined that women make up 71 percent of the audience for daytime soap operas, but the other 29 percent of the audience comes from the children and unemployed and retired men—who also happen to spend much of their time at home.

As a general model, Greenberg and Kumata[38] found that television use peaks during high school, then decreases through age 50, but increases again thereafter.

Children begin their media use with television. According to Merrill,[76] the initial appeal is the medium itself rather than any particular content. The heaviest viewing occurs between the ages of 4 and 12. By age 13, most have begun to use other media. Schramm, Lyle and Parker[96] found that while newspaper readership begins after television use, by the end of high school two-thirds of children read a newspaper daily. Comics are generally the first thing children read.

Clarke[19] found that, in general, children's newspaper reading is associated with parental values—but that family status alone is predictive of children's attention to newspapers. In a later study,[18] he concluded that for teen-age boys, readership of science and sports news is more predictive of lasting interest in newspapers than is readership of teen supplements.

Effects of Newspapers and Television

To enhance comparison, each of the studies on newspaper and television *effects* was assigned to one of six categories—political, violence and aggression, general world views, general learning, media use and interpersonal communication, and consumer affairs. Within each of these six groupings, the effects on attitudes, knowledge and behavior were analyzed where possible.*

Political Attitudes

The three panel studies by Bogart,[10] Rollings and Blascovitch[92] and McCombs and Weaver,[71] and most of the surveys on political attitudes, suggest that newspapers mainly reinforce pre-existing political attitudes and contribute somewhat to the formation of new attitudes. The single experiment by Atkin[5] suggests that newspaper reporting of public opinion polls can influence attitudes toward a specific political candidate, especially if the polls tap the opinions of highly valued reference groups.

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*This is a review of newspaper and television news content on these attitudes, knowledge and behavior. For example, the extensive specialized literature on the effects of advertising (e.g., [30, 34] and [117]) is not included here.

In spite of Atkin's contradictory experimental evidence, some other studies of political attitudes[16, 21, 49] suggest that exposure to newspapers is not enough to cause more long-term change in political attitude, at least not by itself. Some of the studies which examine correlates of both newspapers and television exposure[7, 49, 71, 92] further suggest that television may be more effective at stimulating the formation of new, short-term political attitudes and general political interest, whereas newspapers may be more effective at reinforcing already-formed political attitudes.

Political Knowledge.

Both panel studies and surveys found that exposure to newspapers is associated wtih increased political knowledge (variously defined).[7, 10, 17, 21, 49, 53, 72, 98] All of these studies, except one by Bogart,[10] also included measures of television use (usually television news viewing), and all but one concluded that exposure to newspapers is more strongly correlated with increased political knowledge than is exposure to television news. The exception is a survey of elementary school children in Maryland; it found that television news viewing was more strongly correlated with knowledge of which roles were governmental than was reading newspaper current events material.[22] There are no experimental studies dealing with political knowledge.

A number of fairly recent studies,[70, 78, 115] several of them done over time with the same persons,[66, 71, 107] also suggest that newspaper emphasis on specific political issues is more strongly correlated with overall audience concern about the same issues than is television emphasis on such issues, leading to the inference that newspapers are more effective at telling people what issues to think about in a political campaign than is television, especially earlier in a campaign.[69]

As a whole, the findings from these studies are surprisingly consistent: exposure to newspapers seems to lead to more concern over political issues and to more political knowledge than does exposure to television.

Political Behavior

A number of studies, mostly analyses of newspaper editorials and voting records, suggest that newspaper endorsements of particular political candidates are associated with the winning of elections, especially nonpartisan races where there are few salient or controversial issues.[39, 46, 65, 67, 93] Two studies by Robinson also found aggregate correlations of editorial endorsements with winning the 1968 and 1972 presidential elections in this country.[88, 89].

Most of the studies on political behavior which include measures of both newspaper and television exposure suggest that newspaper use tends to be more strongly associated with voting turnout and various other kinds of political activity than does televison use, even when only television *public affairs* viewing is measured.[17, 32] This conclusion seems to hold for both adults and children.

Likewise, the studies of political behavior which include only measures of newspaper exposure also conclude that such exposure is positively correlated with political participation in Japan,[60] with voting turnout in Ohio,[64] with general political activity in North Carolina[8] and with voting choice in Wisconsin and North Carolina.[5, 8]

Violence and Aggression

Only three studies of violence and aggression were found which considered newspaper exposure as a factor.[31, 119, 120] The first, a survey of U.S. adults, found that heavy TV viewing—regardless of specific content—is associated with more distrust of other persons, more fear of the world in general, an exaggerated fear of being involved in some kind of violence and more dependence upon (positive attitudes toward) established authorities. Heavy newspaper readers, however, showed just the opposite trends—less distrust of others, less fear of the world and less dependence upon established authority.

With regard to knowledge, one of these studies also found that heavy newspaper readers were less likely to overestimate the number of persons involved in law enforcement than were heavy TV viewers, and heavy newspaper readers seemed to have a more trusting picture of the world than did heavy TV viewers. These patterns held for all persons except less-educated, lower-income blacks.

With regard to behavior, the second and third studies[119, 120] examined crime statistics for Detroit, Cleveland, Minneapolis and Vancouver, British Columbia, during and before newspaper strikes in these cities. These studies found that the rates of some crimes (burglary, robbery, larceny and auto theft) declined significantly during newspaper strikes in Detroit, but there was no evidence of any general relationship between newspaper strikes and crime rates in the other cities, leading the author to conclude that the relationship found in Detroit was probably due to chance and that "there appears to be no general relationship between newspaper publication and crime rates." (p. 612)[120]

General Views of the World

Four surveys (including one panel study) which dealt with newspaper use and general attitudes toward real-world phenomena found that newspaper use is associated with the formation of attitudes about topics receiving coverage in newspapers, such as fluoridation[14] and world pollution.[80] Newspaper exposure is also associated with innovativeness, empathy and cosmopolitanism among farmers in Colombia.[91]

The fourth study, involving Indiana University students, found that newspaper editorials and editorial cartoons advocating the same point of view result in more opinion change than either would by itself. Editorials alone seem to produce more opinion change than do cartoons alone.[13]

In the late 1950's, some seven or eight years after the introduction of television throughout the United States, most people perceived that they obtained most of their general news from newspapers rather than television.[59] But by the early 1970's, most people said they obtained most of their general news, especially impressions of international affairs, from television rather than newspapers.[20, 80]

Yet during the 1962-63 New York newspaper strike, Kimball,[54] in a panel study of 200 newspaper readers, found complaints about "lack of detail" and lack of opportunity to "absorb the news" from other media, especially television. Those questioned also said they wanted to know more about general news, sports, advertisements and financial news, suggesting that this kind of information normally was obtained from newspapers.

Newspaper exposure seems to be correlated not only with various kinds of real-world knowledge for adults. There also is evidence from surveys conducted by Schramm, Lyle and Parker[97] that as children grow older, they increasingly use newspapers (and other print media) for learning about the real world, whereas television is used primarily for entertainment and escape.

General Learning

An experiment with 160 university students by Dommermuth[28] found that a printed version of a message produced significantly more change in opinion than a televised version of the same message. Seven other studies which examined the relationships between newspaper exposure and general learning suggested that both newspaper stories and television news shows can convey information and increase the salience of various topics, but information *loss* seems to be greater from television than from newspapers. Printed messages seem to result in more information retention than do televised messages,[28, 116] but there is still a substantial amount of information loss (estimated at an average of 77 percent for radio, television and newspapers combined in an experiment by Wilson). In an earlier experiment, Hazard[45] also found that less exposure to newspapers was associated with less information gain from television newscasts.

A combined content analysis and survey by Booth[12] found that the association between *space* devoted to a topic in a newspaper and recall of information about that topic is stronger than the association between the amount of *time* devoted to a subject by television and recall of information about the subject. In both newspapers and television, accompanying pictures seemed to increase recall of information about the subjects.

Although most of the evidence on information loss and retention from different media is experimental, several surveys by Tichenor, Donohue and Olien[106] find that learning occurs from newspapers but varies with one's initial level of education. These researchers found that knowledge levels differ more in a community with a regularly published newspaper than in a community with a newspaper strike. They also found that the association between level of education and understanding of "more publicized" topics is greater than the association between level of education and understanding of "less publicized" topics. These findings led Tichenor, Donohue and Olien to conclude that newspapers may serve to reinforce existing inequities in knowledge between better-educated and less-educated persons.

Other studies suggest that television plays a major role in delivering important "breaking" news (such as the assassination of a President or a disaster involving many persons), with newspapers tending primarily to supplement television and radio reports of such news.[27] And even though evening television news broadcasts report fewer key events than do the front pages of newspapers, those who rely on television news rather than newspapers don't miss much substance but rather the *details* of major stories.[44]

The single experimental study which dealt with the relationship of general problem-solving behavior to print-media use found that for seventh-grade children, printed messages resulted in more creative problem-solving behavior than did televised solutions, but the differences were not statistically significant.[75]

Media Use and Interpersonal Communication

The single study which considered the relationship between newspaper use and attitudes toward other media involved focus-group discussions with non-readers and light readers of newspapers in Canada.[2] This study found that non-readers and light readers tended to have negative attitudes about reading in general (they regarded it as "work"), and they tended to like radio and television more than newspapers because they perceived radio and TV to be better at presenting what is happening in the world "right now."

Two studies suggest that regular daily newspaper readers tend to be more aware of other print and broadcast media offerings in their communities than do non-readers of daily newspapers.[2, 3] A related study by Deutschmann and Danielson[27] also found that information about important news seems to go directly from television, radio, and—to a lesser extent—from newspapers to their audiences without much interpersonal relaying. These studies also indicate that persons generally do talk with others about major news learned from both newspapers and television.

Further, readers of a weekly newspaper are more likely than not to be readers of a daily newspaper,[2] and readers of a daily newspaper are more likely to watch television *news* on a regular basis than are non-readers.[3] In addition, daily newspaper readers are more likely to belong to community organizations than are non-readers, and thus are more likely to engage in interpersonal communication about community issues and problems.

Summing Up

These studies of the uses and effects of newspapers and television provide many insights into the similarities and differences between these two media, but they also leave many questions unanswered.

With regard to *uses* of newspapers and television, we need more studies which concentrate on people's *motives* for use as well as on various *situational factors* (such as jobs, families, living areas, etc.). While use of newspapers and television for *knowledge* has been fairly well-researched, we know less about use of these and other mass media for *diversion* and as an adjunct to *interpersonal communication.* That is, there are not many studies which look at mass media in relation to other communication activities, either in terms of motives or in terms of the effects those media have on individuals.

With regard to the *effects* of newspapers and television, we *do* have quite a few studies on *political* effects, but not many on the impact of these media on people's *emotions, values* and *propensity to act aggressively* toward others.

But the studies to date do establish one point very clearly: in speaking about competition or differences between newspapers and television, it is necessary to specify precisely what *kind* of competition or difference is under discussion. ■

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Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business

By Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc.

This is the second report prepared for ANPA by Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc., "Tracking the Attitudes of the Public," regarding the newspaper business. It covers the very basic and fundamental question of the credibility of newspapers among the general public and government officials on a national and state basis. An earlier report was published in ANPA General Bulletin No. 68, Dec. 20, 1978.

The source for this report is "Corporate Priorities," an annual tracking study conducted by Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc. and used for planning and public relations strategies by many major corporations in the country. This report presents the results of "Corporate Priorities" research from 1976 through 1978 (surveys are conducted annually in February-March). A full Yankelovich, Skelly and White report to ANPA later this year will update these results with 1979 findings.

Findings In Brief

The study shows that:

- While a strong majority of the public feels that the news they get from newspapers and television is "biased," they tend to define that "bias" not as a problem of showing favoritism to one group or another but rather as a problem of emphasizing the bad news over the good.

- Overall, only about four out of 10 Americans say that they "always or usually" believe newspapers. At the same time, however, compared to other major communicators in our society, newspapers and other major media have relatively strong credibility.

- Among the public as a whole, no apparent distinction is made between the credibility of newspapers and that of TV news. However, among college students, newspapers have unusually strong credibility, while TV news does not.

- Among government officials, both newspapers and news magazines have slightly greater credibility than TV news. Again, like the public, the *relative* credibility of newspapers is strong. On an *absolute* basis, however, only about one out of three government officials views either newspapers or TV news as very credible.

Methodology

The general public sample used by Corporate Priorities is a stratified replicated random sample of 2,200 persons and is projectable to the total U.S. population aged 16 years and over. Interviews are conducted in the home. The sample of government officials surveyed annually includes Congressmen, Senators and key congressional staff (115 in 1977, 114 in 1978), high-level federal agency officials (61 in 1977, 60 in 1978), state legislators and state agency officials from 11 key states (94 in 1977, 92 in 1978) and officials from 20 large cities (41 in 1977, 34 in 1978).

The Public: Credibility Of Information

In both 1976 and 1978, the general public was given a list of possible sources of information and was asked for each source whether they tended to "always," "usually," "sometimes," "seldom," or "never" believe information which came from this communicator (Table 1).

Table 1

Credibility of Information Sources Among General Public

"Every day we all hear different points of view from different people and different institutions. We are interested in knowing how often you believe what different people say. Please tell me how often you believe what each of them says."

	Always/Usually Believe		Seldom/Never Believe		Net	
	1978	1976	1978	1976	1978	1976
Ralph Nader	44*	45	20	18	+ 24	+ 27
Newspapers	39	38	15	18	+ 24	+ 20
TV commentators	40	37	17	18	+ 23	+ 19
Congressional leaders	18	--	28	--	- 10	--
Corporate executives	15	12	36	39	- 21	- 27
Union leaders	17	13	43	42	- 26	- 29
Public Issue ads	10	6	50	53	- 40	- 47

***Results are expressed as percentages**

The results indicated that about four out of 10 Americans (38 percent in 1976 and 39 percent in 1978) always or usually believe newspapers. Television commentators had approximately the same credibility (37 percent in 1976 and 40 percent in 1978). At the same time, about one out of six in the public said that they "seldom" or "never" believed information from either newspapers or television.

The sole individual whose public credibility was measured in both 1976 and 1978 was Ralph Nader. Not only did his credibility remain constant over this period, but it also appeared to be slightly higher than that of both newspapers and TV commentators (45 percent in 1976 and 44 percent in 1978 said that they always or usually believed Nader).

Significantly, however, other communicators (congressional leaders, union leaders, corporate executives) showed significantly weaker credibility profiles. Indeed, corporate public issue advertisements were seen as not very believable by as many as one out of two Americans.

Looking at various demographic groups, one finds no statistically significant patterns in terms of the credibility of either newspapers or TV commentators. The only exception is college students, where one finds unusually strong credibility for newspapers. Fully 52 percent of college students interviewed in 1978 said that they always or usually believed newspapers, making newspapers significantly more credible than TV commentators (39 percent) and on a par with Ralph Nader (49 percent) on U.S. campuses.

In addition to this basic credibility reading among the public, the 1977 Corporate Priorities survey also asked the public whether they thought "television news and newspapers bias the news and distort events" (Table 2). Only 24 percent of the public *rejected* this view, and fully 72 percent indicated that it was definitely true (30 percent) or probably true (42 percent). The only demographic groups showing unusually strong agreement with this statement were Republicans and conservatives.

Table 2

Attitudes of General Public Toward Media Distortion

"Television and Newspapers Bias the News and Distort Events"

	Total Public	Republicans	Conservatives
Definitely true	30*	39	37
Probably true	42	34	38
Probably not true	20	19	16
Definitely not true	4	3	2
Don't know/no answer	4	5	6

*Percent

Table 3

Major Criticisms of the Media By the General Public (1977)

"Which, if any, of these do you think are valid criticisms of news you get from television and newspapers?"

	Percent
Too much emphasis on bad news and not good news	71
Views politicians too cynically	23
Unfair to consumerists, environmentalists	14
Unfair to labor	14
Liberal/Eastern bias	14
Conservative/establishment bias	13
Too pro-business	13
Unfair to business	13
Too pro-union	12
Too pro-consumerist, environmentalists	10
None of the above	13

A follow-up question tried to ascertain what people thought the nature of the media bias to be (Table 3). Fully seven out of 10 indicated that they saw the bias as "putting too much emphasis on bad news and not the good." Only small minorities thought the media were unfair to labor (14 percent), to business (13 percent) or to consumerists and environmentalists (14 percent). And equally small minorities thought that the media were too pro-union (12 percent), too pro-business (13 percent) or too pro-consumerist and environmentalist (10 percent). In addition, only 14 percent felt that the media had a liberal-Eastern bias, although this appeared to be believed to an unusual degree by the Republicans (20 percent) and conservatives (23 percent) who were the most likely to complain about media bias overall.

Government Officials: Credibility Of Information

In both 1977 and 1978, Corporate Priorities surveys of government officials included a question on credibility of various sources of information ranging from the media to interest groups to individuals. Included on the list were "leading newspapers," "news magazines" and "network news." (In 1979, the list will also include "local newspapers.")

Officials were asked to grade the credibility of each source of information from one (highly believable) to seven (not very believable). For comparative purposes,

Table 4

Credibility of Information Sources Among Government Officials

"We're interested in some of the sources of information used by government leaders such as yourself. For each of the sources on the card, please give me your feeling as to how believable you think this source of information is." (Score from 1 to 7; highly believable = 1 or 2.)

	Highly Believable					
	Total Government Officials		Federal Government Officials		State/Local Government Officials	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
Leading newspapers	35*	34	40	40	30	26
News magazines	35	31	35	33	34	29
Large consulting firms	29	27	25	29	35	26
Network news	27	27	31	27	23	26
Common Cause	26	36	23	36	31	38
Environmental groups	25	23	26	21	23	26
Ralph Nader	22	25	21	24	25	27
Consumer groups	13	19	14	20	14	20
Industry spokesmen	7	7	7	8	6	6
Union leaders	6	4	8	5	4	5
Industry trade associations	6	--	7	--	6	--
Industry advertising on issues	2	2	2	--	3	6

*Percent

Table 5

Credibility of Information Sources Among Government Officials

"We're interested in some of the sources of information used by the government leaders such as yourself. For each of the sources on the card, please give me your feeling as to how believable you think this source of information is." (Score from 1 to 7; not very believable = 6 or 7.)

	Not Very Believable					
	Total Government Officials		Federal Government Officials		State/Local Government Officials	
	1978	1977	1978	1977	1978	1977
Industry advertising on issues	37*	32	41	36	32	29
Industry trade associations	21		24		17	
Ralph Nader	17	10	19	10	15	11
Union leaders	15	15	14	10	17	23
Consumer groups	10	6	8	8	11	6
Industry spokesmen	9	8	8	8	11	9
Common Cause	9	7	8	6	10	9
Large consulting firms	7	4	9	6	5	4
Environmental groups	6	7	4	7	8	8
Network news	4	3	3	3	-	5
News magazines	4	2	4	2	5	3
Leading newspapers	4	2	2	1	7	4

*Percent

we have analyzed the results as follows: scores of one or two indicate high credibility, scores of three, four or five indicate moderate credibility, scores of six or seven indicate low credibility (Tables 4 and 5).

All three media which were measured showed *relatively* strong credibility compared to others, including Ralph Nader, Common Cause, consumerists, environmentalists, union spokesmen, industry spokesmen, etc. However, "leading newspapers" were seen as highly credible by only 34 percent of government officials in 1977 and 35 percent in 1978. News magazines had approximately equal credibility (31 percent in 1977 and 35 percent in 1978). Network news appeared to be slightly less credible (27 percent in both years). Fewer than 5 percent of government officials saw any of these media as having low credibility.

Separating out federal government officials from state and local officials, one finds, not surprisingly, that "leading newspapers" are less likely to be seen as highly credible by state and local officials (26 percent in 1977 and 30 percent in 1978) than they are by federal officials (40 percent in both years).

The results of the 1979 survey will reveal whether local newspapers are viewed more positively than "leading newspapers" by these same officials. ■

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Tracking the Attitudes of the Public Toward the Newspaper Business—Part 3

By Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc.

HIGHLIGHTS: This report covers the changes in the public's attitudes, values and life styles, and their impact on newspapers. It is divided into three sections: (1) Overview of Social Change; (2) Key Social Issues and their Impact on Newspapers; and (3) Key Marketing and Advertising Trends.

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This is the third report prepared for ANPA by Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc., "Tracking the Attitudes of the Public" regarding the newspaper business. It covers the changing social climate—the public's attitudes, values and life styles—and its impact on newspapers. Earlier reports were published in ANPA News Research Report No. 19, April 20, 1979, and in ANPA General Bulletin No. 66, Dec. 20, 1978.

The source for this report is the Yankelovich Monitor program, an annual business service that identifies, measures and tracks social change and its impact on business and marketing.

Methodology

The information is abstracted from eight years of research reflecting in-depth surveys of 2,500 persons 16 and older.

Overview of Social Change

The past 10 or 15 years have been characterized by many as a period of massive social change. This period has been described by some as a period of alienation, hedonism, selfishness, etc. Others have characterized it as a period of self-fulfillment, self-realization, etc. Regardless of the viewpoint, American social values have shifted.

Yankelovich, Skelly and White Inc. has been identifying, quantifying and tracking changing values among the public for nearly a decade. The most significant finding emerging from our work is a marked shift from adherence to traditional values.

Historically, the values, life styles and overall attitudes in the United States involved a commitment to traditional goals and means. The *goal* consisted of the desire for success, upward mobility and achieve-

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ment; i.e., climbing the ladder of success. The *means* to the goal involved the Puritan or work-ethic ideal, with the following elements:

- *Self-denial*—sacrificing one's own needs for the sake of the future, the sake of the family
- *Conformity*—the need to "fit" in; to be like other people
- *The commitment to hard work*—as a virtue in its own right
- *Materialism*—to demonstrate upward mobility through tangible material possessions

Over the past few decades a number of factors began to alter these value systems: affluence, educational attainment, new approaches to child rearing, etc. So that in place of traditional upward mobility and work ethic ideals, Americans have embraced new social values:

- *Self-fulfillment*—the desire to get more out of life than money; to learn who one is; to acquire a sense of meaning
- *Self-gratification*—to place an emphasis on the individual even if at the expense of others
- *Self-expression*—to demonstrate individuality

Viewed in terms of percentages, the movement of the population from traditional values is striking. In 1970, just under half the country had adopted new values; by the mid-1970's, the proportion had grown to close to 60 percent; currently, as we approach the 1980's, more than 80 percent of the population has accepted the new values to some extent.

Within this shift from traditional values to new life styles, two developments are worth noting:

- While the impetus for the new values came from college youth in the 1960's, these new values have come to characterize virtually *all* population groups.
- The proliferation of new values through the population was relatively unimpeded by the economic stress that accompanied the 1974-75 recessionary period.

The advent of the new values has led to the adoption, by the population, of some new and fundamental life-style motivators. Viewed in terms of social climate themes and issues, these new motivators are relevant to the subject at hand.

Key Social Issues and their Impact on Newspapers

The following represent some key social and life-style issues and trends characterizing new-values consumers:

The Focus-on-Self

The cornerstone of the new values involves the shift in society from self-denial to a focus-on-self—from self-denial to self-gratification. Among some—and viewed in a positive light—this thrust involves the desire to be judged less in terms of money and position and more in terms of "who I am." Among others—and viewed in a negative light—this thrust involves a certain amount of selfishness.

Regardless of the interpretation, there is no question but that the focus-on-self characterizes significant and growing proportions of the population. For example:

- Half the country manifests strong concern about its physical appearance
- A third of the country is committed to self-fulfillment as a dominant life goal; these consumers tend to be particularly committed to newspapers over other forms of media.
- Self-expression values have grown, in aggregate by about 10 percent a year since the early 1970's.

Instant-Gratification Needs

The traditional work-ethic value system placed an emphasis on hard work. An activity was said not to be enjoyable unless effort was involved—e.g., leisure time involving working on the car, around the home, a sense of accomplishment, etc. The new values orientation has replaced this value system with instant-gratification needs—the desire for the quick, simple and easy.

To cite a few examples:

- Consumer involvement in hobbies and crafts such as needlepoint has been in the direction of "kits" rather than from "scratch."
- Attitudes toward newspaper reading have shifted from previous willingness to "work hard" at reading toward new emphasis on "easy to read."
- Somewhere between half and two-thirds of the country looks for "instant" culture—i.e., the desire to be cultured and sophisticated without working at it, by "knowing" the right words or phrases or by making a purchase.

These instant gratification needs have impacted many other habits as well:

- Electronic media provide "instant" news with a modicum of effort.

- At the same time, the ability to find "instantly" what is contained in a newspaper through indices, content tables, digests, etc., is a real consumer benefit.

Sophistication and the Need to Be "in"

Despite the more-affluent and better-educated character of the American population—as indicated above—we do not appear to be becoming a more in-depth cultural society. Rather, large proportions of the population manifest the desire to display knowledge of or familiarity with names, facts, people and products associated with cultural activities, but in a superficial way. This includes interest in faddism, "in"-ness and cachet.

Further, many individuals, spurred by the desire for experience and the need to be "in," have begun to expand their personal spheres. Experimentation, venturing into new areas, new product classes, etc., are impacting a wide range of areas (e.g., travel, magazine reading, food, etc.). As more experiences are tried—even if only intermittently—more awareness is likely to result in growing taste and sophistication.

For example:

- Half the country feels that knowing about wines and restaurants is a sign of cultivation.

- Nearly the same number feel that being well-traveled is also a sign of cultivation; over six out of 10 derive status from being well-traveled.

- Knowing about gourmet foods, foreign dishes, etc., is considered a signal of cultivation for roughly a third of the population.

- Familiarity with designers as a measure of sophistication and "culture" is important to one out of five.

An important role for newspapers, therefore, is to provide the information necessary to manifest these "in"-ness and sophistication desires.

Time Constraints

As the new values have proliferated through the population, time has become an increasingly precious commodity. Simply put, the demand for leisure is basic to the new social values, but it is being challenged by other demands on the individual's time—such as ongoing, home-linked chores and responsibilities. This dilemma has been exacerbated by the large proportion of women entering the labor force, resulting in a rise in two-earner families (to 53 percent according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census) for whom what was leisure time is being encroached upon by necessary tasks and chores.

Among the consumer solutions to growing time-constraint needs are the following:

- Continued interest in shortcut and convenience mechanisms of all types

- Discontinuation of certain household chores and responsibilities

- A willingness to substitute money for time—e.g., a willingness to pay more at a convenience store

A Growing Interest in Escapism

While the desire for self-fulfillment has been a basic goal of the new social values, there is evidence that this goal is proving to be an elusive one for significant proportions of the population. That is, since the definition of fulfillment varies from person to person, and since the *desire* does not always lead to the accomplishment (particularly in an instant-gratification society), self-fulfillment is less than easily found. As the disenchantment with self-fulfillment grows, escapism—fun, hedonism, pursuits that "turn off" the mind—is likely to result. Current data suggest that the size of the escapist-oriented segment is about a third of the population—equal in size to the self-fulfillment group described earlier.

Recent efforts on the part of newspapers have been aimed at the self-fulfillment portion of the population—leisure, crafts and hobbies, cooking, a wide range of fulfilling pursuits and discoveries. As the desire for escapism grows, the need for newspapers to deal with this phenomenon will become significant.

The Implication for Newspapers

Collectively, this brief overview of current life styles and social values impacts newspaper *readers* as follows:

Clearly—and as the newspaper business is already aware—there is no such thing as a "typical" reader. The fragmented and heterogeneous character of current life styles is reflected in the approach to newspaper reading. That is, while traditional social values have eroded (as discussed earlier), readers with traditional values still exist; and among the new values of society, some manifest fulfillment needs, some escapism needs.

Compounding the changing approach to newspapers experienced by the business is the availability of electronic media and the extent to which the public has been acculturated to it. Clearly, the fit between current life styles and electronic media is strong:

- The desire to acquire information with a modicum of effort

- The desire for instant gratification

- The need (real or perceived) to save time

The dilemma impacting newspaper readers, therefore, is to satisfy the need for information within the context of the new-values life style. In this regard, the shift in life styles suggests that the role of newspapers in terms of *content* has been broadened rather than narrowed.

Generally, the new-values orientaton with its emphasis on the "needs of self" suggests an overall view of newspapers in terms of "what's in it for me." Within this context, the focus on news *per se* reflects a greater interest in local news than on national or international news.

Contents Viewed as Being of Most Interest When Reading a Newspaper	Monitor Study %
Local news	82
National news	72
International news	54

The need for in-depth news, a classic strength for newspapers, still exists but appears limited to special segments of the population.

In the new-values context, news *per se* is perceived as the "ticket of admission," i.e., a given. Reflecting the self-gratification thrust, the public appears to seek more personalized satisfaction from the need for information. For some, this is manifested through a need for in-depth information covering a wide range of special interests and areas—reflecting the self-fulfillment thrust described earlier. From a nationwide perspective, this thrust would appear to involve around a third of the population.

The more numerous new-values consumer seeks life style-linked cues and information to aid one's pursuits and pastimes—reflecting "in"-ness needs, sophistication needs, etc.

- What experiences are available to me (entertainment listings, features, etc.)?
- What is "in"? What should I know about? What am I missing?
- How am I doing in relation to others?

Within this context, it is not surprising that retail advertising is frequently mentioned ahead of other content areas as being of most interest.

Key Marketing and Advertising Trends

The purpose of this section is to relate the implications of changing life styles to marketing. Put another way, based on changing consumer social values, what are the issues on the minds of marketers and advertisers? What marketing areas or functions are undergoing change?

In this regard, the following implications can be drawn:

- Consumers generally appear to approach markets with the focus-on-self orientaton uppermost in their minds. That is, consumers appear to think in terms of "me" products and "we" products. A "me" product is a product tapping into self-gratification needs: apparel, cosmetics, personal-care products, etc. The implication here is one of market vitality and opportunities; i.e., "I deserve the best," "I am worth it," etc. "We" products are those for the family and the home. The implication here is not necessarily for downtrading but rather for greater concern about the price/value relationship.
- Most marketers and advertisers have become aware of the need to *market* rather than *sell* products to consumers. Selling assumes consumer acceptance; marketing takes into account consumer needs, wants, goals and desires. While this distinction impacted most businesses some time ago, two businesses recently have begun moving in the marketing direction: banking and retailing.
- The life-style changes affecting retailing have been significant. With the involvement of women away from home and at work, the *designated* shopper within the household has come to be blurred—often including men and older children. Across the board, consumers appear to draw the "me" versus "we" distinction for shopping. "Me" outlets tend to include specialty stores, those reflecting high-end merchandise and service needs. The more mass outlets, particularly supermarkets, are reflective of "we" product concerns.

In this regard, the changing role of women, concerns about the economy and time constraints suggest vulnerability to supermarkets from convenience stores, at one end, and bulk-purchasing outlets, at the other. More generally, the direction of life styles would continue to favor—perhaps accelerate—the consumer interest in direct marketing.

- Given changing approaches to shopping and time constraints, the direction of current life styles favors the need for more advertising. Consumers appear to reflect broader interests than product awareness—the focus of attention is elsewhere. The need for frequent advertising is a result.
- Similarly, the need for promotional activity on the part of marketers is acute. This would include promotions to build traffic, as well as in-store promotions. ■

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Personal Needs and Media Use

By David H. Weaver, G. Cleveland Wilhoit and Paul Riede

HIGHLIGHTS: Personal needs are more important than traditional demographic factors, *except* age, in predicting newspaper and television use in the Indianapolis market. For the two needs most important to the persons in this study (to keep tabs on what's happening and to relax), both newspapers and television are used more often than other media, and both provide fairly high levels of satisfaction. However, newspapers satisfy both needs somewhat better than television. Although television does not seem to be doing as well at satisfying people's need for entertainment as do books and movies, it is relied on by more people who feel a need for entertainment than are other media. Newspapers receive rather low ratings for satisfying people's needs to have influence on things and to plan their days, even though newspapers are generally chosen over other media for satisfying these needs.

and

Locating and Identifying Stable New Subscribers

By Kenneth M. Jackson and Keith R. Stamm

HIGHLIGHTS: The most powerful predictors of which new subscribers would maintain their subscriptions for a year or more all are related in some way to how permanently these individuals are settling into the community. Those over age 35 and parents with children in school are more likely to be stable subscribers.

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Personal Needs and Media Use

By David H. Weaver, G. Cleveland Wilhoit
and Paul Riede

Weaver is an associate professor of journalism and director of the Bureau of Media Research at Indiana University. Wilhoit is a professor in the School of Journalism at Indiana University and a member of the ANPA News Research Committee. Riede is a graduate student in the School of Journalism at Indiana University. The authors appreciate the assistance of graduate student Brian Werth in analyzing the data. This research was partially supported by a grant from the ANPA News Research Center.

Social categories of age, sex, education and occupation are often useful in predicting newspaper readership (and other media use), but these categories do not explain *why* certain people read or don't read. The present study goes beyond those social categories to focus on people's needs and the relationship of certain needs to use of newspapers and other media. This approach is commonly known as "media uses and gratifications research."

This report attempts to relate the importance of various audience needs to the kind and frequency of mass media use. It also examines audience levels of satisfaction with different media in meeting various needs.

Findings in Brief

Interviews in the Indianapolis metropolitan area with four randomly selected samples of adolescents, young adults, middle adults and older persons revealed surprising agreement about which one of nine personal needs was most important. The need to "keep tabs on what's going on" was ranked most important by all groups. But a fair amount of disagreement emerged about the importance of other needs. The need to relax and release tension was the second-most important need for all but adolescent females and middle-aged males. The least-important personal needs generally were the need to "kill time" and the need to "avoid feeling lonely."

Newspapers and television were just about evenly split in the frequency of their use to satisfy the need to keep tabs. Newspapers were predominate for both male and female young people, and middle-aged and older males. Television was the dominant source for keeping tabs for adolescents, middle-aged females and older females.

Newspapers and television also were closely competitive in being used to satisfy the need to have influence. Adolescent females, young persons of both sexes and middle-aged females cited newspapers as primary media sources for satisfying their need to have influence. Adolescent and middle-aged males, and older persons of both sexes cited television as a source of influence.

Television use clearly dominated other media sources for most of the other needs asked about, particularly entertainment. The only exception was the need to "know oneself better," for which books were the dominant media source cited.

People in our study generally were more satisfied with mass media in gratifying the needs to keep tabs on things, to relax and to be entertained than in satisfying the needs to plan one's day and to have influence on things. Newspapers were rated *highest* for helping people keep tabs on what's going on around them and *lowest* at helping people keep from feeling lonely.

The best predictors of time spent with a newspaper each day for all persons combined in our study were age (the older the person, the more time spent) and a greater need to keep tabs on what's going on. For the separate age groups, a greater need to keep tabs on things was an important predictor for all persons except the older adults. Being married was another predictor of time spent with a newspaper which cut across all age groups except the adolescents.

The best predictors of being a newspaper subscriber for all persons combined were owning one's home, supporting a political party and being married. For the individual age groups, the personal needs were more important as predictors of subscribing, but owning one's home was a strong predictor for the adolescent and younger adults, and being married was a strong predictor for the middle-aged and older adults.

The need to keep tabs on things was not nearly as strong or as consistent a predictor of newspaper subscribers as it was of time spent with the newspaper, suggesting that people decide to subscribe (or not to) more because of their living arrangements than a need to keep up with things.

As for time spent with television each day, the strongest predictors in our study were a greater need to kill time (especially for older adults), being married (for adolescents and younger adults), less need to keep tabs on things (for younger adults) and less need to plan one's day (for middle-aged and older adults).

The need to be entertained was *not* an especially strong or consistent predictor of television use, whereas the need to kill time was a strong predictor for older persons and was moderately strong for adolescents and younger adults, suggesting that television may be better at helping younger and older people pass time than at entertaining them.

Methodology

Telephone interviews were conducted with four groups of persons from a disproportionate stratified sample from 786 randomly selected households in the Indianapolis metropolitan area:

- Adolescents [14-20] (N = 265)
- Young adults [21-34] (N = 175)
- Middle adults [35-61] (N = 149)
- Older persons [62-87] (N = 197)

Interviews were completed during April and May of 1978 by professional interviewers. The frequency and strength of nine different needs—taken from earlier studies of people's motives—were assessed. Studied were activities pursued to meet various needs (including use of newspapers and other media); frequency of mass media use; and satisfaction derived from media use. (See Figure 1 for the wording of some of these questions.)

Figure 1

Selected Questions Used in Indianapolis Study

1. About how often do you feel the need to be *entertained?*[1]
   ___always ___often ___occasionally ___seldom
   ___never (skip to next page) ___don't know (don't suggest)
2. When you want to be entertained, is the feeling usually:
   ___very strong ___strong ___moderate ___weak
   ___very weak ___don't know (don't suggest)
3. When you want to be entertained, what do you do? What activity do you turn to?
   (List all activites mentioned) ____________________
   (If respondent has mentioned *one* of the mass media, skip to question 6. If *more* than one medium is mentioned, skip to 5.)
4. How often, if at all, do you turn to any of the mass media when you want to be entertained?
   ___always ___often ___occasionally ___seldom
   ___never (skip to next page) ___don't know (don't suggest)
5. Which of the mass media would you *most* want to use in this situation?[2]
   ___radio ___television ___magazines ___movies
   ___newspapers ___books ___don't know (don't suggest)
6. When you *(read a newspaper, etc., based on reply given in Question 5 above)* does it entertain you:
   ___a lot? ___a fair amount? ___a little?
   ___hardly at all? ___don't know (don't suggest)?

Personal Needs

The most-important personal needs (both in terms of how often and how strongly felt) were the need to keep tabs on what's going on and the need to relax and release tension. These were the most-important needs for all ages and sexes, except for two subgroups. Adolescent females considered the need to be entertained slightly more important than the need to relax, and middle-aged males said the need to have influence on things around them was slightly more important than the need to relax.

The least-important personal needs for all persons were the need to kill time and the need for companionship (to avoid feeling lonely), except for adolescent males and older females, who considered the need to get to know oneself better somewhat less important than the need to kill time.

Having influence on things was the need on which the greatest discrepancy of importance was found, with adolescent, young and middle-aged women suggesting that this need was much less important than for their male counterparts.

Frequency of Media Use to Satisfy Personal Needs

The various media (newspapers, magazines, radio, television, movies and books) were used most frequently in response to three needs: (1) The need to keep tabs on what's going on around a person; (2) The need to be entertained; and (3) The need to kill time. Table 1 shows that groups used the media most frequently to "keep tabs." Females in our study generally used media more frequently in response to the need to kill time than in response to the need to be entertained; males generally indicated the opposite pattern.

Media were least-often used by all persons in response to the need to plan one's day and the need to have influence on things.

In general, the more important the need for a particular group, the more likely mass media were to be used to satisfy that need rather than other activities.

Media Used to Satisfy Personal Needs

Males (except for adolescents) favored newspapers for keeping tabs. Females, on the other hand, seemed to favor television for keeping tabs on what's going on around them, except for younger females (21 to 34 years old) who favored newspapers (Table 2).

Newspapers frequently were cited as the most-desired medium in response to several other needs besides the need to keep tabs on what's going on. These included the need to find out what other people are saying about things important to a person and the need to

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[1] Separate questions (using precisely the question form illustrated here) were asked for each of eight different personal needs: (1) entertainment, (2) relax and release tension, (3) keep tabs on what's going on around you, (4) to get to know yourself better, (5) have an influence on things happening around you, (6) find out what other people are saying about things that are important to you, (7) plan your day, (8) kill time. The ninth need—dealing with loneliness—was presented in this way: "Almost all of us feel lonely at times, some more than others. About how often do you feel lonely?"

[2] The six media cited in this question were included because we were particularly interested in comparing their use to satisfy the different needs. But other media, such as records and concerts, were sometimes mentioned in the open-ended question that preceded this one (question 3 above).

Table 1

Average Frequency of Media Use to Satisfy Various Personal Needs

	Needs								
	Keep tabs	Be entertained	Kill time	Relax	Feel lonely	Hear others	Know self	Have influence	Plan day
Adolescent males (n = 109)[a]	5.53[b]	5.82	5.43	4.65	4.17	4.12	2.61	2.58	2.48
Adolescent females (n = 116)	5.95	5.35	5.54	5.18	4.67	3.80	2.87	2.40	2.44
Young males (n = 96)	5.54	5.75	5.66	4.78	3.85	4.76	2.90	2.45	2.68
Young females (n = 50)	6.28	5.27	6.42	4.89	3.86	5.54	3.67	3.30	2.71
Middle males (n = 70)	6.89	5.10	5.56	5.00	3.75	5.18	2.30	1.87	2.54
Middle females (n = 58)	5.72	6.62	5.96	5.04	4.96	5.76	3.43	3.20	2.81
Older males (n = 45)	6.29	6.15	5.26	3.33	4.43	4.63	3.00	2.61	2.33
Older females (n = 110)	6.29	5.26	5.55	4.69	4.07	4.78	2.83	2.72	1.77

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[a] These n's vary somewhat from one need to another. The largest number of cases is reported for each group.

[b] 1 = *never* turn to any mass media to satisfy this need
7 = *often* turn to one or more of the mass media to satisfy this need

have influence on things happening around a person. Middle-aged persons also preferred newspapers over other media for planning their days.

For two of the needs for which media are used most often (to be entertained and to kill time), television was the most-desired medium for nearly all persons in our study. Adolescent females (14 to 20) preferred movies over television for entertainment, and middle-aged males (35 to 61) preferred books over television for killing time. But otherwise, television dominated in satisfying these two needs.

In sum, television seemed to be the most-favored medium for relaxing, killing time and being entertained, but newspapers were favored by males for keeping tabs on what's happening around them and by females for having influence on things around them, possibly because women are more likely to use newspapers for shopping information. Newspapers also were favored by males for finding out what other people are saying about important things, whereas females generally preferred television for this purpose. Middle-aged men and women preferred newspapers for planning their days, but younger and older persons generally preferred television.

The Needs Which Media Satisfy

Most people in our samples were generally *most* satisfied with the media's ability to help them keep tabs on what's going on. Other needs that seemed to be well-served by the media in general were relaxation and entertainment. Those needs for which people were generally *least* satisfied with media performance were planning one's day and having influence on things around them (especially females for the latter).

Television and newspapers are the media ranked best at satisfying the two personal needs most important to the persons in this study—to keep tabs on what's going on and to relax. However, television and newspapers also were mentioned as the most desired in response to planning one's day and having influence on things, the two needs for which people were *least* satisfied with media performance.

Table 2

Specific Medium Used Most Often to Satisfy Various Personal Needs

	Needs								
	Keep tabs	Be entertained	Kill time	Relax	Feel lonely	Hear others	Know self	Have influence	Plan day
Adolescent males (n = 86)[a]	TV[b]	TV	TV	TV	TV	Np	Bk	TV	Np + TV
Adolescent females (n = 102)	TV	Mv	TV	TV	TV	Np + TV	Bk	Np	TV
Young males (n = 80)	Np	TV	TV	TV	TV	Np	Bk	Np	TV
Young females (n = 45)	Np	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV	Mg	Np	Np + Rd
Middle males (n = 66)	Np	TV	Bk	TV	TV	Np	Bk	TV	Np
Middle females (n = 52)	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV	Np	Bk	Np	Np
Older males (n = 39)	Np + TV	TV	TV	TV	Mg	Np	Bk	TV	TV
Older females (n = 103)	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV	TV	Bk	TV	TV

[a] These n's vary from one need to another. The largest number of cases is reported for each group.

[b] TV = television; Np = newspapers; Rd = radio; Mg = magazines; Mv = movies; Bk = books.

Perceptions of the Media

Newspapers received their highest average, need-satisfaction score from those persons who use newspapers to keep tabs on what's going on around them. The very small minority of persons who used newspapers to keep from feeling lonely appeared to be the least satisfied with newspaper gratification of that need. Television also was rated highest at helping people keep tabs and was rated lowest at helping people plan their days.

For the two needs considered most important by the persons in our study (to keep tabs on what's happening and to relax), newspapers were rated best at helping people keep tabs, and books and movies were rated best at helping people relax. Somewhat surprisingly, radio was rated lowest at helping people keep tabs, and magazines were rated lowest at helping relax.

For two of the needs for which media were used most often (to be entertained and to kill time), newspapers were rated least satisfying. Radio was rated best at helping entertain people, and movies were rated best at helping people kill time.

Even though books are used by a relatively small number of persons, those who do turn to books for such needs as knowing oneself and having influence generally are more satisfied than are people who turn to other media to satisfy those needs. Magazines—which are rated best at helping people find out what other persons are saying—are an exception.

Television is rated lowest at helping people plan their days. Newspapers are rated lowest at helping people avoid feeling lonely and know themselves better.

Predictors of Newspaper Use

The strongest predictor of the average number of minutes spent per day with a newspaper for all persons combined was age.[1] The older a person, the more minutes per day he or she spent with the newspaper.

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[1] These predictors were drawn from the measures of the nine personal needs, as well as from more standard demographic measures including sex, age, income, occupation, education, level of political interest, home ownership, marriage, participation in local organizations and political party identification.

Another strong predictor of newspaper use for the entire sample was the need to keep tabs on what's going on.

An increased need to keep tabs was the first- or second-strongest predictor of newspaper use for all age groups in our study except older persons, implying that newspapers are helpful in satisfying this need for most persons (Table 3). This conclusion is supported by the satisfaction scores discussed earlier. Other predictors which seemed to cut across the various age groups were political partisanship and being married.

Apparently newspapers were not very helpful for those persons who had strong needs to have influence or to plan their days, because having *less* of these needs resulted in more time spent with a newspaper. These two needs also were the ones for which people in our study were least satisfied with media.

Predictors of *subscribing* to a newspaper, however, are different from *use* predictors. Owning one's home and being married were two of the most-consistent predictors across all age groups (Table 4). The needs to relax and to find out what others are saying were fairly strong predictors of being a subscriber for middle-aged and older persons, and the needs to kill time and to keep tabs were moderately strong predictors for adolescents and younger persons.

For all persons combined, age is a much-weaker predictor of subscribing to a newspaper than spending time with it, and increased support of a particular political party is a much-stronger predictor of subscribing than of reading, suggesting that political partisanship may be an important factor in a person's decision to subscribe or not to subscribe.

Predictors of Television Use

The strongest predictors of the average number of hours spent per day watching television were an in-

Table 3

Predictors of General Newspaper Use: Average Number of Minutes per Day

	Adolescents (14-20) (n = 265)	Younger Adults (21-34) (n = 175)	Middle-Aged Adults (35-61) (n = 149)	Older Adults (62-87) (n = 197)
1.	*More need to keep tabs*[a]	More need to keep tabs	More political partisanship	Less need to plan day
2.	More political interest	Less activity in local organizations	More need to keep tabs	Less political partisanship
3.	Being married	More need to hear others	Less feeling of loneliness	Higher socio-economic status
4.	Lower income	More political partisanship	Older age	More need to relax
5.	Less activity in local organizations	Being married	Being married	Being married
6.	Less need to hear others	Being male	Being female	Less need to have influence

[a] These predictors were determined using multiple regression analysis. Italicized predictors are strong, whereas others are weak to moderate in strength. Predictors are ranked from 1 (strongest) to 6 (weakest).

Table 4

Predictors of Subscribing to a Newspaper

	Adolescents (14-20) (n = 210)	Younger Adults (21-34) (n = 151)	Middle-Aged Adults (35-61) (n = 130)	Older Adults (62-87)(n = 168)
1.	*More need to have influence*[a]	*Owning home*	*More need to relax*	*Being married*
2.	*Owning home*	*Less need to hear others*	*Being married*	*More need to hear others*
3.	More need to kill time	More need to keep tabs	Less need to know self	Being female
4.	Less need to relax	More need to know self	More political partisanship	More need to be entertained
5.	Less need to hear others	Lower socio-economic status	More need to keep tabs	Higher socio-economic status
6.	More political partisanship	Less need to relax	More need to be entertained	More political interest

[a] These predictors were determined using discriminant analysis. Italicized predictors are strong, whereas others are weak to moderate in strength. Predictors are ranked from 1 (strongest) to 6 (weakest).

Table 5

Predictors of General Television Use: Average Numbers of Hours per Day

	Adolescents (14-20) (n = 265)	**Younger Adults** (21-34) (n = 175)	**Middle-Aged Adults** (35-61) (n = 149)	**Older Adults** (62-87) (n = 197)
1.	Being married[a]	Less need to keep tabs	Less need to plan day	*More need to kill time*
2.	More need to relax	Being married	Older age	More activity in local groups
3.	Less political interest	Less income	Being female	Less need to plan day
4.	Less need to be entertained	More need to be entertained	Higher socio-economic status	Less need to know self
5.	More need to kill time	Being female	More feeling of loneliness	Less need to relax
6.	More need to plan day	More need to kill time	Less need to hear others	More need to be entertained

[a] These predictors were determined using multiple regression analysis. Italicized predictors are strong, whereas others are weak to moderate in strength. Predictors are ranked from 1 (strongest) to 6 (weakest).

creased need to kill time, being married, less need to keep tabs on things and less need to plan one's day. However, these predictors varied across age groups, suggesting that people of different ages use television for different purposes (Table 5).

Somewhat surprisingly, the need to be entertained was not a predictor of television use except for younger and older adults (and was a *negative* predictor for adolescents). The need to kill time was a predictor for all age groups except the middle-aged. This suggests that television may be better at helping younger and older people kill time than at truly entertaining them, even though nearly every group in our study (except adolescent females) said they used television more often than any other media to satisfy the need to be entertained.

Implications

Both newspapers and television were used most often in response to the predominate need of persons in the Indianapolis samples: the need to keep tabs on what is happening. These media were used much less often for relaxation, the second-rated need. However, newspapers and television seem to be providing fairly high levels of satisfaction for keeping tabs on things and for helping people relax, with newspapers doing somewhat better than television for both needs.

In terms of other fairly important needs, neither newspapers nor television is doing so well. Television, for example, was chosen over other media most often when people had a need for entertainment, but television received the next-to-the-lowest score (newspapers were lowest) for helping people be entertained. Also, the need to be entertained was not a consistent predictor of time spent with television, whereas the need to kill time was.

Newspapers, on the other hand, were chosen over other media for satisfying the need to have influence on things (especially by women) and the need to plan one's day (especially by younger and middle-aged persons). But persons using the media for these purposes were generally much less satisfied with media performance for satisfying these needs than were others who chose the media for different needs.

These findings suggest that newspapers may not be living up to people's expectations in providing information which can be used to have influence on things and to plan their days.[2] We speculate that additional information about participating in political decisions, how to contact local and national political officials, notices of road repairs or damage, items of business and other closings, and more detailed weather forecasts may be the kinds of thing sought by these users.

In conclusion, this study finds that personal needs are much more important than traditional demographics factors, *except age*, in predicting and explaining newspaper and television use in Indianapolis. The challenge for mass media executives is to accurately assess these personal needs and to respond to them in a creative manner. To do so will require more research and more attention to the research results than has been the case in the past. ■

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[2] A study by James B. Lemert and others ["Journalists and Mobilizing Information," *Journalism Quarterly*, 54:721-726 (Winter 1977)]of 11 prominent newspapers found that "mobilizing information" (information that permits reader action) was most likely to be missing in controversial stories dealing with public affairs on the main news pages. Lemert and the others also found that such information was also notably absent in editorials and on the rest of the editorial pages. In addition, not a single one of 18 different syndicated political columns carried any mobilizing information. The conclusion reached was that mobilizing information seemed "least available in these prominent American newspapers where the audience may most have needed it: controversial political issues in the main news and editorial pages, where government was involved in the controversy and such aids as the readers' local telephone directory could not be used to supplement the information in the item, since the controversy most likely was located out of town."

Locating and Identifying Stable New Subscribers

By Kenneth M. Jackson and Keith R. Stamm

The authors are on the faculty of the School of Communications, University of Washington. This study was supported by Fournier Newspapers through the Valley Publishing Co. Special appreciation is expressed to Willits Smull of the newspaper staff who assisted in monitoring circulation figures and helped recode data. W. Lee Ruggels, Stanford Research Institute, provided valuable analytical suggestions.

Getting and keeping subscribers is of central concern to most newspapers.

Many effective methods have been devised for getting new subscribers, such as circulation drives, contests, gifts and bonuses. But high attrition rates among newly recruited subscribers often bite deeply into any circulation gains. Yet most newspapers have no choice but to pour resources into new-subscriber recruitment, if only to maintain stable overall circulation levels.

So it seems that newspapers are in need of a more-efficient means of locating and identifying potentially stable new subscribers.

This study examined new subscribers to a group of suburban newspapers and checked on their stability by monitoring them for a year. It provides descriptive data on new subscribers and a selection of variables that predict subscription stability or attrition among new subscribers.

Findings in Brief

- The net loss of subscribers for the year of monitoring was 29 percent, with the greatest attrition in the third and fourth months after recruitment.

- These new subscribers were attractive as potential long-term customers, since most were young households just starting their peak years of family and community involvement and buying.

- Nineteen variables were screened as possible predictors of subscription stability, but few proved to be useful or statistically significant. In particular, *life style* variables were not related to stability.

- Some *life stage* variables were slightly predictive, since those over 35 and parents with children in school were more likely to be stable subscribers.

- The most-powerful predictors of subscription stability all were related in some way to how permanently individuals were settling into the community and appeared to reflect an individual's *life setting.*

Background

A previous ANPA study reported that mobility of the newspaper audience represents a strong potential for recruitment of new subscribers as well as a threat of attrition (ANPA News Research Report No. 6, "Newspaper Use Among New Residents," Oct. 5, 1977). That study showed that a substantial proportion of new residents become first-time subscribers upon relocating. Others resubscribe to a newspaper, while some former subscribers drop out as customers. The study also documented a general increase in the use of newspapers during the period of relocation.

One purpose of the present study was to further demonstrate the impact of mobility on the recruitment efforts of newspapers. For example, the previous findings suggested that a sizeable proportion of new subscribers also should be new residents and that a significant proportion of subscriber attrition also should be due to mobility. It also can be reasoned that a newspaper's overall prospects for circulation growth are dependent on the ratio between in-migration and out-migration.

A further purpose was to investigate the extent to which mobility factors are related to the stability of recently established subscriptions. This allowed us to pursue the double-edged nature of mobility as both an opportunity and as a problem with potential for both subscription addition and attrition. This turned the research focus more sharply toward "keeping" rather than "losing" subscribers.

Previous studies of subscription "stops" have identified a number of factors other than mobility which account for attrition *after* the fact. Our expectation was that additional mobility factors would be more useful as predictors—in accounting for attrition *before* the fact.

Because of the likelihood that other variables also might be useful indicators of subscription stability, other potential predictors were screened. These included variables from three categories of new-subscriber descriptions: demographic characteristics; previous subscription history; and current interest in content and use of the newspaper.

Methodology

The study was conducted within the circulation area of a small group of suburban dailies in the Seattle metropolitan area. A systematic random sample was drawn from the new-subscriber rolls of Fournier newspapers and stratified in proportion to the circulation of each newspaper.

Telephone interviews were employed, after several in-person, pre-test interviews. Calling was done in the evening to avoid over-representation of females. However, an even sex-split necessarily could not be expected because the interviewers were instructed to talk to the person who had taken out the subscription.

Up to two callbacks were made for each working phone number, resulting in a completion rate of 80 percent. The refusal rate was less than 5 percent. The resultant sample is highly representative of the newspapers' new subscribers but not necessarily of their readers or overall subscribership.

All the data were obtained before cancellation, not after. The data on attrition were provided by the circulation department, which monitored the status of each subscription for 12 months.

Findings

The attrition for new, suburban subscribers was not as high for the monitoring period as anecdotal reports had led us to expect. Seventy-one percent of the new subscribers still were taking the newspaper one year after initial recruitment. Attrition peaked in the fifth, sixth and seventh months—which appeared to be the third and fourth months after individual subscriptions started.

Table 1

Subscription Losses
Across 12 Months[1]

Month	Loss (%)[2]	Month	Loss (%)[2]
1	0	7	5.0
2	0	8	1.7
3	2.3	9	2.0
4	3.2	10	1.0
5	5.3	11	1.3
6	5.0	12	1.7

[1] The subscribers signed up during the first three months of the monitoring period, so the peak in attrition appeared to come three or four months after subscriptions started.

[2] Given as a percentage of 301. A total of 87 subscribers, 29 percent of those recruited, were lost during monitoring period.

The demographics of new subscribers were somewhat surprising and extremely useful to the newspaper in advertising promotion. More than half were under 35 years of age and about 75 percent were women. The high percentage of women was not an unintended sampling bias but rather the result of interviewing the person in the household who had taken out the subscription. Most of the women were managers of households and appeared to take the newspaper to aid them in that role. Most were married and either childless or with young children. So it seemed that these new subscribers were just starting their heavy buying years and therefore prime prospects for the newspapers and their advertisers.

Demographics did not prove as useful as predictors of subscriber stability as expected. However, those over 35 and those with school-age children were more likely to be stable. Sex of the subscriber was clearly unrelated to stability. Most of the new subscribers were married, so there was virtually no variance.

Table 2

Selected Demographic Characteristics
Of Stable and Unstable Subscribers[1]

Age	**Under 35**	**Over 35**
Stable Subscribers	65%	77%
Unstable Subscribers	35%	23%
	N = 152	146
	($X^2 = 4.83$, $p. < .05$, 1 df.)	
Family Status	**Children in School**	**None in School**
Stable Subscribers	79%	67%
Unstable Subscribers	21%	33%
	N = 95	203
	($X^2 = 4.48$, $p. < .05$, 1 df.)	
Sex	**Male**	**Female**
Stable Subscribers	70%	71%
Unstable Subscribers	30%	29%
	N = 77	221

[1] The table should be read from left to right, with the key comparison the difference between percentages for stable subscribers on a particular characteristic. In the table above, 65 percent of those under 35 were stable and 77 percent of those over 35 were stable, a statistically significant difference of 12 percent. Since 71 percent of the whole sample remained stable during the monitoring period, the proportion of stable subscribers having any characteristic is much greater than the proportion of unstable subscribers. A quick estimate of the predictability of a variable can be obtained by comparing the column percentages for stable subscribers with the sample percentage of 71.

Questions were asked about each respondent's subscription history in the expectation that a record of short-term subscriptions or no previous subscriptions would be useful in identifying bad risks. None of these expectations were supported.

Substantial numbers of the new subscribers reported previous and concurrent subscriptions to other newspapers, and 40 percent had been readers of the suburban newspaper before subscribing. But those with any particular kind of subscription history were not more likely to be stable. The study also found that those who initiated their own subscription were slightly more likely to be stable, but the number was quite small and not statistically significant.

A provocative finding was that subscribers who reported delivery problems were *less likely* to stop the newspaper. This was unexpected since previous studies showed that delivery problems are major reasons offered by individuals for stopping subscriptions *after* they had dropped (e.g., McCombs *et al.*, 1975). Perhaps because they wanted or needed the newspaper more, those persons better able to cope with or to overcome delivery problems were more likely to remain subscribers.

New subscribers as a group showed an impressive amount of interest in both local news and advertising. The proportion of those "very" or "moderately" interested in local news categories ranged from 88 percent for economic news to 52 percent for sports. For advertising, the range was from 84 percent for grocery ads to 34 percent for furniture ads.

We expected that some of these verbal reports of content interests would predict subscription stability, but no relationships were found. The analysis was even refined to ensure that interests expressed pertained to news or advertising about the local community. Still there was no difference between these types of persons on stability.

The new subscribers did show a substantial preference for the suburban newspaper as their primary source for all categories of news and advertising, although about 60 percent also subscribed to a metropolitan daily. For local news, the proportion relying on the suburban newspaper ranged from 65 to 74 percent; and for local advertising, from 68 to 84 percent. Again, there were no significant differences on these variables that predicted stability.

As expected, new subscribers proved to be strikingly mobile. Nearly 40 percent had been at their present address less than a year, and about 70 percent had been there less than five years. At the same time, over a fourth thought they might be moving within a year. They were mobile in other ways, too, with over 60 percent commuting to another community for their jobs.

Along with all of this actual and projected mobility, there were indications that many of the new subscribers wanted to stay put. Over 40 percent reported they expected to remain at the same address for 10 years or more. And nearly three-fourths said they owned or were buying their homes.

Analysis revealed that certain of these mobility measures had the strongest relationship with subscription stability. It was not so much how mobile individuals had been in the past, but how permanent they appeared to be in their present setting that predicted subscription stability.

Specifically, those who projected long-term residence were more likely to be stable than those who expected to be moving soon or were uncertain about the length of their stay. Those who actually had lived at their present address for more than 10 years were somewhat more likely to be stable, but the difference was not statistically significant.

Owners or buyers of their homes were much more likely to be stable than renters. Home ownership appeared to stabilize both residence and subscription.

These indicators of permanent settling into the community served by the newspaper emerged as the most powerful predictors of subscription stability.

Table 3

Mobility Measures and Indicators
For Stable and Unstable Subscribers

Length of Residence[1]	Less than Year	1-10 Years	More than 10 Years
Stable Subscribers	68%	69%	82%
Unstable Subscribers	32%	31%	18%
	N = 117	131	50

Anticipated Residence[2]	Less than Year	1-10 Years	More than 10 Years
Stable Subscribers	60%	61%	84%
Unstable Subscribers	40%	39%	16%
	N = 84	83	131
	$X^2 = 19.68$,	$p. < .001$, 2 df.	

Home Ownership Status	Own or Buying	Renting
Stable Subscribers	77%	54%
Unstable Skubscribers	23%	46%
	N = 218	80
	$X^2 = 15.39$,	$p. < .001$, 1 df.

Employment Location[3]	In Circulation Area	Outside Area
Stable Subscribers	69%	74%
Unstable Subscribers	31%	26%
	N = 157	141

[1] Time new subscriber had lived at present address.

[2] Time new subscriber expected to live at present address.

[3] Circulation area included community of residence and surrounding districts served by community newspaper.

Discussion

This study was conducted on a small sample, in a particular circulation situation and with a restricted set of questions. If these findings are confirmed in a series of more-general studies, then they raise provocative questions and implications for newspaper management and the future of newspapers.

As mentioned, we expected that mobility would provide useful predictors of subscriber stability, but we did not expect that so many of the other descriptors would wash out. We were surprised that these stability predictors were clustered in a small set of variables that reflect the degree of settling down into the suburban setting as a family.

So we changed the way we viewed a potential subscriber.

The demographic variables such as sex, age and marital and parental status reflect the individual's *life stage*. These descriptors indicated where the person is on the so-called "life cycle," which for a given individual is a birth-to-death series of stages.

The variables covering activities, interests, preferences and experiences reflect a small part of the individual's *life style*. These provided a partial description of what the individuals do and how they do it.

Finally, variables having to do with the physical and social context within a particular community reflect *life setting*. These responses indicate the ways and degree of settling down permanently within a particular community, apparently as part of a household rather than just as an individual.

Stage, style and setting are not proposed as exhaustive, mutually exclusive categories, but simply as useful ways of viewing aspects of an individual's total *life space*. Each view has both promise and problems.

Life *stage* descriptors are easy to obtain and appear suggestive of other things but don't provide strong, stable subscriber prediction in and of themselves.

Life *style* descriptors attract newspapers since they are so obviously related to consuming and other activities for which this medium is considered most appropriate. However, the few descriptors used in this study were not predictive, as well as being difficult and risky to interpret.

Life *setting* descriptors provide the most provocative view, with great potential payoff since they locate newspaper users in a challenging target area.

Suggestions

These preliminary findings suggest thinking in terms of long-term strategies rather than immediate tactics or applications.

Newspapers should question "traditional wisdom" as to why individuals start and stop subscribing. They should launch a continuing program of research and development on appropriate aspects of mobility and life space.

Newspapers must learn more about when, how and why individuals and families settle into a community so that they can not only benefit from this rooting down but also how they can facilitate such permanence.

Newspapers should consider covering communities in ways that emphasize life setting and activities associazted with settling down, because it is here that newspapers provide their broadest service and apparently have their greatest effect.

Perhaps there is a limited amount of direct influence that papers can have on making young people into stable subscribers. If the major determinant of long-term subscriptions is an individual's life situation, then newspapers probably can't do much about luring prospects into stable subscriptions until they're at the proper stage and in an appropriate setting. Given current statistics on continued mobility of the young and the rapidly growing number of single-person households, this must be a high priority problem.

Newspapers should concern themselves more about expanding the population of part-time customers and consumers, devising ways to make more of the mobile young people occasional and regular users of the newspaper. Perhaps this is the most efficient way of preparing them to become regular subscribers when the stage and setting are right.

Finally, newspapers should develop systems to locate, identify and track past, present and especially potential subscribers. Newspapers need early alert systems to spot potential subscribers when they move into the circulation area, watching especially for life-setting indicators such as buying a home. They also need monitoring networks to keep track of residents as they move around within the area. And they should even develop networks with other newspapers to exchange information about customers moving from one place to another.

Mobility can carry prospects into a newspaper's circulation area—and mobility can carry them right out again. ■

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American Newspaper Publishers Association
ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT
FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER No. 22 September 28, 1979
A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

ROUTE TO:
Editorial ________
Promotion ________
Circulation ________
Advertising ________
Production ________
Personnel ________
Other ________

Newspaper Readership and Circulation An Update: 1977-79

By Paula M. Poindexter

HIGHLIGHTS: Over 100 new research findings have appeared since 1977, but there still are many gaps in our knowledge of newspaper readership. Both the gaps and areas of extensive knowledge are detailed in this report which updates a previous summary in ANPA News Research Report No. 3 of all publicly available readership research. With this update a computerized bibliography of more than 500 research findings is available from the ANPA News Research Center.

and

Rate of Adoption of Modern Format by Daily Newspapers

By J. W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III

HIGHLIGHTS: Most dailies have adopted at least some aspects of modern format, and there is little difference between large dailies and other dailies in the rate of adoption. Eighty-four percent of large dailies and 96 percent of other dailies are using horizontal format on the front page. Nearly all newspapers are using white space rather than rules between columns, and a majority are using six-column formats.

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Maxwell E. McCombs, Director, ANPA News Research Center

Newspaper Readership and Circulation
An Update: 1977-79

By Paula M. Poindexter

Paula M. Poindexter is a doctoral student at the S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University and former graduate assistant at the ANPA News Research Center.

This is a report on the ANPA News Research Center's continuing efforts in locating, abstracting and indexing published studies and private reports on newspaper readership and circulation. It is an update of ANPA News Research Report No. 3, "Newspaper Readership and Circulation," published May 27, 1977. That report, which described more than 200 reports and articles and over 450 different research findings, mapped out the research literature over a quarter century, from 1950 through 1976.

Report No. 3 also described a computerized file and index from which researchers could request abstracts of these studies. The index is based on 12 focal questions and six perspectives for analyzing reader behavior.

This update discusses 64 additional studies which have been located in different publications and private files since 1976. These studies represent 118 new research findings and include new focal questions (dependent variables) and additional perspectives for readership and circulation analysis (independent variables.)

Focal Questions (Dependent Variables)

Table 1 lists the major focal questions used by researchers. The focal questions have remained fairly constant since Report No. 3.[1] Researchers of newspaper readership and circulation have, over the last two years, continued to ask essentially the same questions about readership and circulation. The principal new questions asked were:

- Why do many people read a weekly newspaper?
- How does the reader perceive various newspaper attributes?

The two focal questions asked most often between 1977 and 1979 were:

- What combination of newspaper item characteristics and audience characteristics account for specific readership patterns? (Selection of Specific Items, 24 times)
- What explains why some people read a newspaper while others ignore it? (Reading vs. Non-Reading, 22 times)

Another way of evaluating the research generated by the focal questions is to ask: How many were *major* research efforts devoted to the focal question and how many were just minor references within the study? Using 50 percent as a benchmark, it is apparent from Table 1 that major research emphasis has been placed on studies in four main areas:

Table 1

Research and Circulation Research, 1977-1979

	Total Number of Findings	Major Findings
Reading/Non-Reading	22	14
Subscribing/Non-Subscribing	12	5
Frequency of Reading	5	3
Amount Read	3	0
Selection of a Newspaper	5	0
Newspaper/Other News Media		
Newspaper	6	3
Magazine	2	0
Radio	3	1
Television	4	3
Weekly	2	2
Selection of Items	25	7
Reading two Newspapers	1	0
Time Newspaper is Read		
Time of Day	1	0
Time of Week	0	0
Reading Method	0	0
Circulation Penetration	7	7
Penetration Trends	3	1
Circulation Patterns	8	1
Pattern Trends	1	1
Perception of Newspaper Attributes	3	3
	113	51

- Reading vs. Non-Reading
- Frequency of Reading
- Selection of a Newspaper vs. Another News Medium
- Circulation Penetration

Still another way of looking at the focal questions to evaluate the research which has been done since 1976 is to ask: How much *more* do we know about the focal questions? Which areas have had a lot of research activity and which have had relatively little? Table 2 compares research reported between 1950 and 1976 with studies betwen 1977 and 1979 to determine how much progress we are making.

Table 2 shows which areas have been the most popular for the researchers since 1976. There has been an increase of at least a dozen research findings for three of the focal questions:

- Reading vs. Non-Reading (+22)
- Subscribing vs. Not Subscribing (+12)
- Selection of Specific Items to Read (+34)

Table 2

A Comparison of Recent and Previous Research Focal Questions

	Number of Research Findings 1950-1976	Increase Between 1977-1979	Total Findings 1950-1979
Reading/Non-Reading	53	+22	75
Subscribing/Non-Subscribing	11	+12	23
Frequency of Reading	26	+5	31
Amount Read	31	+3	34
Selection of a Newspaper	28	+5	33
Newspaper/Other News Media			
Newspaper	25	+6	31
Magazine	16	+2	18
Radio	16	+3	19
Television	26	+4	30
Weekly	0	+2	2
Selection of Items	154	+25	179
Reading two Newspapers	9	+1	10
Time Newspaper is Read			
Time of Day	13	+1	14
Time of Week	9	0	9
Reading Method	10	0	10
Circulation Penetration	15	+7	22
Penetration Trends	6	+3	9
Circulation Patterns	7	+8	15
Pattern Trends	6	+1	7
Perception of Newspaper Attributes	0	+3	3
	461	113	574

An increase of between five and 10 research findings is evident in five areas:

- Frequency of Reading (+ 5)
- Selection of a Specific Newspaper (+ 5)
- Selection of a Newspaper vs. Another News Medium (+ 7)
- Circulation Penetration (+ 7)
- Circulation Pattern (+ 8)

Table 2 also shows those areas which have been rather dormant since 1976. Those areas in which the number of research findings has *not* exeeded five are:

- Amount Read in the Newspaper (+ 3)
- Selection of a Newspaper vs. Radio (+ 3)
- Selection of a Newspaper vs. Television (+ 4)
- Reading two Newspapers (+ 1)
- Time of Day Read (+ 1)
- Time of Week (0)
- Reading Method (0)
- Penetration Trends (+ 3)
- Pattern Trends (+ 1)

Analyzing Reader Behavior (Independent Variables)

The 12 dependent variables or focal questions presented in Tables 1 and 2 specify the behavior which we wish to explain or, at least, predict. Past studies of newspaper circulation and readership have approached these tasks of explanation and prediction from at least six different perspectives.[2] The readership and circulation studies between 1977 and 1979 have examined research questions from the previously defined six perspectives plus nine new perspectives.

The additional perspectives which have been used to analyze reader behavior are:

- *Community Characteristics.* This approach looks at such factors as the number of households; number of single family dwelling units; population gain of the community.
- *Organization and Market Characteristics.* This independent variable considers newspaper competition within the market; whether a newspaper is an AM or PM; whether single ownership newspapers have separate managements.
- *Price Per Copy.* This perspective examines the effect of different prices of the newspaper on circulation.
- *Dislocation.* This independent variable looks at new residents moving into a community and asks what effect their moving has on readership and circulation.
- *Community Attachment.* This variable is defined by people who feel "at home" in their community; are interested and involved in what goes on in their community.
- *Childhood Exposure.* This variable is becoming increasingly popular in the readership and circulation literature. It tries to determine the relationship between exposure to the newspaper as a child and adult newspaper reading habits.
- *Use of Other Media.* This perspective examines the effects of using alternative media (television, radio, magazines) on newspaper reading.
- *Interpersonal Communication.* This variable seeks to determine the influence of discussions about politics or public affairs information on readership.
- *Political Variables.* This strategy examines the influence of party affiliation or political participation on readership and circulation.

Table 3 lists the 15 perspectives which have been used in the analysis of readership and circulation. One pattern is immediately obvious. Most of the investiga-

Table 3

Analysis Perspectives for Readership and Circulation, 1977-1979

	Total Number of Findings	Major Findings
Structural Attributes	6	5
Social Categories	21	8
Young People	12	7
Elderly	0	0
Blacks	7	3
Psychological Characteristics	4	3
Psychographics	5	3
Attitudes	9	0
Uses-and-Gratifications	7	3
Community Characteristic*	5	4
Organization-Market Characteristics*	2	2
Price Per Copy*	1	1
Dislocation*	1	1
Community Attachment*	1	1
Childhood Exposure*	4	2
Use of Other Media*	1	0
Interpersonal Communication*	1	0
Political Variable*	2	0
	89	43

*New Independent Variable

tions about readership and circulation have used the demographic characteristics of the reader to predict newspaper readership. (This is consistent with the previous pattern found in Report No. 3.)[3]

Which of these approaches to analyzing reader behavior were dominant between 1977 and 1979? Using 50% as a benchmark, it can be seen that in eight of the 15 areas, there have been major efforts for research. These areas are:

- Structural Attributes
- Social Categories
- Psychological Characteristics
- Psychographics
- Community Characteristics
- Organization and Market Characteristics
- Childhood Exposure
- Political Variables

How does recent research compare with previous research on the various perspectives for analyzing reader behavior? Has there been an increase in our knowledge about reader behavior? Table 4 compares the perspectives for analyzing reader behavior in recent research (1977-79) with studies published between 1950 and 1976. In only the two areas has there been an increase of at least a dozen research findings:

- Social Categories (+ 21)
- Young People (+ 12)

Table 4

A Comparison of Recent and Previous Research: Analysis Perspectives

	1950-1976	1977-1979	Total 1950-1979
Structural Attributes	15	+ 7	22
Social Categories	175	+ 21	196
Young People	60	+ 12	72
Blacks	20	+ 7	27
Elderly	3	0	3
Psychological Characteristics	13	+ 4	17
Psychographics	35	+ 5	40
Attitudes	59	+ 9	68
Uses-and-Gratifications	59	+ 7	66
Community Characteristics	0	+ 5	5
Childhood Exposure	0	+ 4	4
	439	81	520

In six areas, there has been an increase of between five to 10 research findings:

- Structural Attributes (+ 7)
- Blacks (+ 7)
- Psychographics (+ 5)
- Attitudes (+ 9)
- Uses-and-Gratifications (+ 7)
- Community Characteristics (+ 5)

Table 4 also shows those areas in which there has been only a small amount of research activity over the past few years. Those areas in which the number of research findings has *not* exceeded five are:

- Elderly (0)
- Psychological Characteristics (+ 4)
- Childhood Exposure (+ 4)

An even more detailed map of the empirical research which was done between 1977 and 1979 can be created by combining the 17 focal questions (dependent variables) and the 15 analysis perspectives (independent variables) to produce 255 types of readership and circulation research. The schematic presentation in Table 5 shows that only 56 out of the 255 cells contain any studies at all. In other words, almost three quarters of the cells were not even touched by researchers during this period.

While the number of cells increased from 200 in Report No. 3 to 255 in this report, the details of the cells remain sketchy.[4] Researchers are searching for new independent variables and more focal questions to find ways to explain newspaper readership and circulation, but seem to be making little progress in filling in the gaps already created between 1950 and 1977.

Table 5

Focal Questions and Analysis Perspectives
1977-1979

	Structural Attributes	Social Categories	Young People	Elderly	Blacks	Psychological Characteristics	Psychographics	Attitudes	Uses-and-Gratifications	Community Characteristics	Organization-Management	Price Per Copy	Dislocation	Community Attachment	Childhood Exposure	Use of Other Media	Interpersonal Communication	Political Variable
Reading/Non-Reading	▨	■	■		■	▨	▨		▨	▨				▨	■	▨	▨	■
Subscribing/Non-Subscribing		■	▨		▨		▨		■				▨		▨			
Frequency of Reading		■			▨			▨										
Amount Read		▨																
Selection of a Newspaper	▨	■						■										
Newspaper/Other News Media																		
Newspaper •			■					▨	▨									
Magazine •			▨		▨													
Radio •			▨		▨													
Television •			■															
Selection of Items		■	▨		▨	■	▨	■	■						▨			
Reading two Newspapers		▨																
Time of Day		▨																
Time of Week																		
Reading Method																		
Circulation Penetration	■									■	▨	▨						
Penetration Trends		▨	▨															
Circulation Patterns										▨								
Pattern Trends																		
Read a Weekly		▨							▨									
Perception of Newspaper Attributes	■										▨							

(shaded) = 1
(solid) = 2-5

As Report 3 concluded, this update on the newspaper readership and circulation literature, too, concludes that the state of knowledge about newspaper readership and circulation remains uneven. In the mosaic defined by the 17 dependent variables and 15 independent variables, there are *even more* gaps to be filled now than there were in 1977.

How to Receive Details

The ANPA News Research Center maintains a computerized bibliography of all published readership research done over the past 28 years. This index contains six basic pieces of information about each of the 587 research findings abstracted from the literature. The index identified studies by independent and dependent variables, date of publication, source of study, status as a public or private and status as a major or minor study. For details on the contents and use of this bibliography, see *ANPA News Research Report No. 3* or send a request for a set of relevant abstracts to:

Dr. Maxwell E. McCombs
Director, ANPA News Research Center
S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications
Syracuse University
Syracuse, N.Y. 13210 ☐

Footnotes

[1] See Table 1, page 3 for focal questions used in studies between 1950 and 1976 in "Newspaper Readership and Circulation," *ANPA News Research Report No. 3*, May 27, 1977.

[2] See Report No. 3, p. 3.

[3] See Report No. 3, Table 3, p. 4.

[4] See Report No. 3, Table 5, p. 5.

Rate of Adoption of Modern Format by Daily Newspapers

By J. W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III

J. W. Click is professor and Guido H. Stempel III director of the School of Journalism at Ohio University. *This study was funded by a grant from the ANPA News Research Center.*

There is a substantial degree of adoption of modern format. It is, however, somewhat uneven, with some modern format devices more widely adopted than others. Thus, for example, the use of horizontal makeup is nearly universal. It is unusual that a newspaper does not use horizontal makeup, and that represents a marked change in the last decade. On the other hand, the majority of newspapers have gone to six-column format, but there is a substantial number which have not. Likewise, downstyle is the majority preference, but there are still many newspapers which have not adopted it.

It is interesting, too, to note that the extent of adoption of modern format is nearly the same among the newspapers under 100,000 circulation as for those with more than 100,000 circulation. This has not been the case in the past. The extent to which smaller newspapers have adopted modern format perhaps reflects the extent to which the new technology and offset processes in particular provide opportunity for any editor, whether his newspaper is large or small, to be innovative with typography. For example, if an editor back in the days of hot type had suggested that he wanted to replace column rules with white space, or in other words leads, he might have found resistance in the composing room. His request changed the process. Some printers perceived that change as more work. With cold type and with offset, that argument could hardly be made. This is not the only example of this proposition.

Previous Research

Very few newspapers were using modern formats in 1967 when the authors made their first study of reader reaction to front page makeup. In that study, we found that readers preferred horizontal makeup, although both examples presented to them used eight-column pages.[1]

Sometime later in an experiment using tabloid formats, Price produced all eight possible versions of three typographical variables: horizontal vs. vertical headline display, horizontal vs. vertical picture display, and narrow (11-pica) vs. wide (19-pica) measure body type. He reported in 1973 that none of the variables individually influenced readership significantly, but that the three variables interacted to produce significantly different readership scores. He found that combining horizontal and vertical display elements, long recommended by design experts to achieve the important design principle of contrast, tended to increase readership. That is, combining vertical headline display with horizontal pictures, narrow-measure body type with horizontal pictures, vertical pictures with horizontal headlines, and so on, produced higher readership scores than were obtained from pages without such combinations. Price also concluded that wide-measure body type may aid readership.[2]

Wide measure also is more readable, according to Hvistendahl and Kahl. In their study, all four news stories set in 14-pica measure were read faster than four stories set in 10.5-pica measure in Roman and sans serif faces.[3]

In another study reported in 1973, Price tested six page designs: four standard formats, one six-column page and one five-column page. Reader reaction, as indicated by semantic differential scores, ranked the five column and the six-column pages first and second among the six.[4]

In their 1972-1973 study of front pages of 46 competing daily newspapers in 23 U.S. cities, Weaver, Mullins and McCombs found 20 percent of the newspapers using six-column format and 71 percent using eight- or nine-column format. Their other findings, based on 166 issues of these newspapers, show that only 10 percent had the largest page one picture more than four columns wide, 20 percent used headlines larger than 72-point type, only five percent used color pictures, 25 percent used column rules, and 48 percent ran more than eight stories on the front page and 42 percent ran five to seven stories on the front page.[5] At least these 46 newspapers were still predominately traditional in format at that time.

A number of newspapers had made the transition to modern formats when we made a follow-up study for ANPA in 1973, although some editors had fears that modern formats might be considered sensational and might be viewed negatively by readers. That study provided evidence that such doubts were unfounded and that readers prefer six-column horizontal, or modern formats. Of six front pages presented to respondents, the three modern-format newspapers were 1-2-3 overwhelmingly in three test cities and by a slight edge in the fourth. There was no clear preference for any one of the three modern-format newspapers, however. Each of the three was first in one city and two tied for first in the fourth city.[6] Concern over age differences was reduced when the data showed that respondents over age 40 gave higher ratings to the three modern pages than to any of the traditional pages. Preference for modern formats was not peculiar to youth.

In a later study the authors sought to confirm the hypothesis that readers prefer newspapers with four-color halftones on front pages over those with only black-and-white halftones. The differences on the semantic differential scales used to test the hypothesis were so substantial in favor of color pictures that they cannot be ignored. The results made clear that a newspaper can enhance its image or reader-receptiveness by using four-color halftones.[7]

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which modern typography has been adopted by the nation's daily newspapers and to compare large metropolitan newspapers with other newspapers in this regard. We made the distinction because we assumed that the rate of adoption would be greater for the larger newspapers. Changes that have occurred in newspapers have occurred sooner in larger newspapers. This, for example, has clearly been true in the development of photography and in the development of special sections and specialized coverage of various kinds.

We drew two random samples. One was 25 dailies of more than 100,000 circulation. The other was 75 dailies of less than 100,000 circulation. There were 119 dailies of more than 100,000 circulation and 1,643 of less than 100,000 circulation listed in the *1977 Editor & Publisher Yearbook.*

We asked each of the newspapers to send us copies of each issue for the week of January 9-14, 1978. We received the copies for all the newspapers except one. This report, then, includes 25 newspapers of more than 100,000 circulation and 74 newspapers of less than 100,000 circulation. We coded each newspaper for five days, eliminating Saturday and Sunday editions because they are atypical in a variety of ways.

The newspapers of more than 100,000 circulation were:

Los Angeles Herald Examiner
The Tribune, Oakland, Calif.
The Sacramento (Calif.) Bee
The San Diego Union
The Evening Tribune, San Diego
The Denver Post
The Miami Herald
The Wall Street Journal (Midwest Edition), Chicago
The Journal Star, Peoria, Ill.
The Indianapolis News
News-American, Baltimore, Md.
The Detroit News
The Flint (Mich.) Journal
Kansas City (Kan.) Star
New York Daily News
Democrat & Chronicle, Rochester, N.Y.
The Cincinnati Enquirer
The Plain Dealer, Cleveland
The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City
Oregon Journal Portland, Ore.
The Morning Call, Allentown, Pa.
The Dallas Morning News
The Virginian-Pilot, Norfolk, Va.
The Richmond (Va.) News Leader
The Seattle Times

The newspapers of less than 100,000 circulation were:

The Decatur (Ala.) Daily
Scottsdale (Ariz.) Daily Progress
The Springdale (Ark.) News
Texarkana (Ark.) Gazette
Colusa (Calif.) Sun-Herald
Corning (Calif.) Daily Observer
The Daily Southeast News & Downey (Calif.) Champion
Imperial Valley Press, El Centro, Calif.
Herald-News, Fontana, Calif.
The Daily Review, Hayward, Calif.
Antelope Valley Ledger-Gazette, Lancaster, Calif.
Lodi (Calif.) News-Sentinel
Independent Press-Telegram Long Beach, Calif.
Oroville (Calif.) Mercury Register
Daily Midway Driller, Taft, Calif.
Vista (Calif.) Press
Sterling (Colo.) Journal-Advocate
Bristol (Conn.) Press
Ft. Lauderdale (Fla.) News
Naples (Fla.) Daily News
Chronicle, Augusta, Ga.
The Times, Gainesville, Ga.
LaGrange (Ga.) Daily News
The Macon (Ga.) Telegraph
The Idaho Statesman, Boise
North Idaho Press, Wallace
Canton (Ill.) Daily Ledger
The Daily Journal, Kankakee, Ill.
Tribune, New Albany, Ind.
The Record, Cedar Falls, Iowa
The Daily Republican, Burlington, Kan.
The Garden City (Kan.) Telegram
The Sun, Lowell, Mass.
The Ann Arbor (Mich.) News
The Alpena (Mich.) News
The Hillsdale (Mich.) Daily News
Globe, Ironwood, Mich.
Faribault (Minn.) Daily News
Rochester (Minn.) Post-Bulletin
The Southeast Missourian, Cape Girardeau, Mo.
The Daily Dunklin Democrat, Kennett, Mo.
News-Press, St. Joseph, Mo.
Daily Standard, Sikeston, Mo.
The Daily Times, North Las Vegas, Nev.
The Daily News Batavia, N.Y.
The Journal, Ogdensburg, N.Y.
Henderson (N.C.) Daily Dispatch
The Herald, Roanoke Rapids, N.C.
Journal-Tribune, Marysville, Ohio
The Springfield (Ohio) Daily News
The Evening Chronicle, Uhrichsville, Ohio
The Oklahoma Journal, Oklahoma City
Shawnee (Okla.) News-Star
Albany (Ore.) Democrat-Herald
The Danville (Pa.) News
The Express, Easton, Pa.
The Meadville (Pa.) Tribune
Pottsville (Pa.) Republican
Eagle, Reading, Pa.
The Herald, Sharon, Pa.
The Daily Review, Towanda, Pa.
Warren (Pa.) Times-Observer
The Wilkes-Barre (Pa.) Times Leader
The Woonsocket (R.I.) Call And Evening Reporter
Call/Pioneer-Times, Lead-Deadwood, S.D.
Capital Journal, Pierre, S.D.
The Paris (Tenn.) Post Intelligencer
Favorite, Bonham, Texas
Mid-Cities Daily News, Hurst, Texas
San Antonio (Texas) News
Ogden (Utah) Standard-Examiner
The Daily Herald, Provo, Utah
News, Hopewell, Va.
The News, Lynchburg, Va.

Findings

Our overall finding is one of a high degree of adoption of modern typography and of surprisingly little difference between large dailies and other dailies. Some aspects of modern design have been more widely accepted than others, and there are a few substantial differences between large dailies and other dailies. There also are some differences between what is being done on front pages and what is being done on inside pages. Yet, the trend is clear.

Table 1

Typographic Characteristics of Front Pages of Large and Other Dailies

	More Than 100,000 Circulation	Less Than 100,000 Circulation
White Space Between Columns	96%	99%
Flush Left Heads	96	92
Horizontal Makeup	88	96
Centered Heads	79	91
White Space Around Heads	79	65
Boxed Stories	75	63
Six-Column Format	71	53
Kickers Over Heads	67	48
Indented Heads	58	40
Downstyle	54	72
Two-Deck Heads	50	28*
Modern Roman Headline Face	38	52
Boldface Lead-ins	38	20
Rules Around Stories	33	32
Boxed Heads	29	31
Subheads in Stories	25	31
Borders Around Heads	25	13
Boldface Paragraphs	17	23
Borders Around Stories	12	23
Heads Beside Stories	12	9
Boldface Stories	0	5

*$p < .05$

As Table 1 shows, 84 percent of the large dailies and 96 percent of the other dailies have horizontal format on page one. A majority of both groups of newspapers use downstyle headlines and six-column formats. Nearly every newspaper in the study uses white space instead of column rules on the front page. A wide variety of devices is being used to vary headline format, with the use of kickers or overlines the most common. Table 1 clearly reflects the tendency of most newspapers to use varied headline formats. While nearly all the newspapers have flush left heads on the front page, a majority of the large dailies use some centered and some indented heads as well. Use of centered heads and indented heads by other dailies is not quite as great, but still substantial.

Table 2

Typographic Characteristics of Inside Pages of Large and Other Dailies

	More Than 100,000 Circulation	Less Than 100,000 Circulation
Flush Left Heads	92%	95%
Kickers Over Heads	88	84
Subheads in Stories	88	68
Boldface Lead-ins	88	45*
Centered Heads	83	97**
Boxed Stories	83	55
Six-Column Format	79	41*
Two-Deck Heads	79	35*
White Space Around Heads	75	60
Gothic Headline Face	67	70
Boxed Heads	67	55
Boldface Paragraphs	58	49
Rules Around Stories	54	41
Indented Heads	46	40
Modern Roman Headline Face	42	57
Borders Around Stories	42	37
Heads Beside Stories	42	29
Borders Around Heads	38	47
Boldface Stories	4	19**

*$p < .05$

**$p < .001$

Table 2 provides some evidence that inside pages are treated somewhat differently than front pages. The clearest evidence is the substantially lower use of six-column formats on inside pages, with 84 percent of the large dailies and only 41 percent of the other dailies using six-column formats. There's also a clear indication that less is being done by the newspapers less than 100,000 circulation to break up body type on inside pages.

Tables 3 and 4, dealing with characteristics of headlines, also provide an indication of the move to modern formats. The majority of heads on the larger newspapers and a majority of the inside page heads on the other newspapers are one-line heads, as Table 3 indicates. Three-line heads, once a prominent element of front pages, now amount to 20 percent of the front page heads in the large dailies and only 10 percent of the inside page heads on those newspapers. For the other newspapers, only 12 percent of the front page heads are three-line heads.

The one characteristic of modern format that is not widely in evidence is the use of color. Twenty-one percent of the large dailies and four percent of the others used a color picture at least once during the five days we checked. Most of the color pictures were local and most were on the front page. There were more timeless than timely pictures among the color pictures, as might

Table 3

Depth of Headlines for Large and Other Dailies

	More Than 100,000 Circulation		Less Than 100,000 Circulation	
	Page One	Inside	Page One	Inside
One-Line Heads	57%	59%	49%	56%
Two-Line Heads	23	31	39	34
Three-Line Heads	20	11	12	10
N	1,206	18,429	3,930	39,406

Chi Square (Page 1) = 98.60 $p < .001$
Chi Square (Inside) = 44.06 $p < .001$

Table 4

With of Headlines for Large and Other Dailies

	More Than 100,000 Circulation		Less Than 100,000 Circulation	
	Page One	Inside	Page One	Inside
One Column	57%	51%	47%	52%
Multi-Column	39	2	50	2
Banner	4	47	3	46
N	1,206	18,429	3,930	39,406

Chi Square (Page 1) = 47.48 $p < .001$
Chi Square (Inside) = 6.63 $p < .001$

be expected given the inherent technical complications. However, 35 percent of the newspapers used tint blocks, colored borders, colored nameplates or some other form of color on the front page. It is not surprising that if newspapers used color at all they used it on the front page. What was somewhat of a surprise was that frequently the front page color was the only color. It was also somewhat surprising that wire photos were used in color so infrequently.

Design and Circulation

It has been suggested by some that the use of modern makeup is related to circulation. Those who comment on this differ, however, as to what the connection might be. Some suggest it helps circulation—while others suggest it hurts circulation.

To see if there was any relationship, we correlated the degree of modernization with what had happened to that newspaper's circulation in the last 10 years. We considered six specific characteristics—use of six-column format, use of white space rather than rules, use of downstyle heads, use of horizontal format, use of modern Roman type and use of white space around heads.

We gave each newspaper a point for each of these. The newspaper's score then could be between 0 and 6. As a measure of circulation, we took the percentage increase between 1968 and 1978, as shown in figures in the *Editor & Publisher Year Book.* We correlated the makeup score with the circulation gain percentage, using Pearsonian correlation. For the newspapers with more than 100,000 circulation, the correlation was -.22. That is not a statistically significant correlation, an indication of little relationshp between typographic characteristics and circulation.

For those newspapers with less than 100,000 circulation, the correlation was exactly .00, indicating no sign whatsoever of any connection between these two factors.

Conclusions

We conclude that the ups and downs of circulation do not seem to be connected to format. There are newspapers which have gone to modern format and which in the last decade have gained circulation. There are others which have not gone to modern format and which have gained. There are those which have gone to modern format and lost heavily and those which have not changed format and also lost heavily. Our earlier study provided clear indication that readers like modern format. These data underscore the point that format is far from the only factor affecting whether or not a person buys the newspaper.

Since this assessment of the state of adoption is the first of a national sample, it is difficult to predict whether our figures represent a rather stabilized picture in which most newspapers have made whatever decision they're going to make or whether we have captured a continuing trend at a given moment. There is no way for us to predict whether five years from now the extent of adoption of modern format will be about the same or will have increased. This is particularly true because the degree of adoption of modern format in one short decade has been so great. □

Footnotes

[1] J. W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, "Reader Response to Newspaper Front-page Format," *Journal of Typographic Research,* 2:127-142 (1968). Summarized in *ANPA News Research Bulletin No. 7,* June 28, 1973, pp. 50-51.

[2] Henry T. Price, "Some Possible Effects of Design on Readership," *ANPA News Research Bulletin* No. 7, June 28, 1973, pp. 48-49.

[3] J. K. Hvistendahl and Mary R. Kahl, "Roman v. Sans Serif Body Type: Readability and Reader Preference," *ANPA News Research Bulletin No. 2*, Jan. 17, 1975, p. 11.

[4] Henry T. Price, "Front-Page Design as Evaluated by the Newspaper Reader," *ANPA News Research Bulletin No. 7*, June 28, 1973, pp. 51-52.

[5] Calculated from data in David H. Weaver, L. E. Mullins and Maxwell E. McCombs, "Competing Daily Newspapers: A Comparison of Content and Format," *ANPA News Research Bulletin* No.8, Dec. 31, 1974, p. 15.
Also see Gerald C. Stone, John C. Schweitzer and David H. Weaver, "Adoption of Modern Newspaper Design," *Journalism Quarterly*, 55: 761-66 (Winter 1978).

[6] J. W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, "Reader Response to Modern and Traditional Front Page Make-up" *ANPA News Research Bulletin* No. 4, June 3, 1974, p. 5.

[7] J. W. Click and Guido H. Stempel III, "Reader Response to Front Pages with Four-Color Halftones," *Journalism Quarterly*, 53:736-738 (1976).

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ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT
FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER
No. 23 October 31, 1979
A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

ROUTE TO:
Editorial ________
Promotion ________
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Newspaper Readership Among Public School Children Grades 7-12

By John B. Mauro

HIGHLIGHTS: Nine out of 10 students either read or are exposed to a daily newspaper on a regular basis. There is little difference in newspaper reading exposure among various grade levels. However, as students pass on to higher grade levels, there is a noticeable drop in television viewing according to a survey conducted among 7th-12th graders in the Richmond, Virginia, area public schools. The most important predictor of newspaper reading among students is the availability of newspapers in the home.

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John B. Mauro is director of research for Media General, Inc. and a member of the ANPA News Research Committee.

This study of newspaper use in the home by junior and senior high students found:

- Fifty-two percent of the students read a Richmond morning newspaper two or more times per week—slightly more boys (58%) than girls (52%)—and these ratios seem to hold among all sixth grade levels.

- Seventy-three percent of those who read the morning newspaper say they also read at least another daily newspaper—notably, Richmond's evening newspaper.

- Median time spent reading the morning newspaper—21 minutes.

- Seventy percent of the students start reading the morning newspaper by first turning to a specific page or section. Boys opt for the sports section (71%). Girls prefer to go to comics (44%) and entertainment pages (19%).

- Best read comics among boys and girls were Dennis the Menace, Blondie, Marmaduke and Beetle Bailey. Similar preferences occurred with each grade.

- News or features that interest boys are, in rank order, sports, movies, local news and other entertainment. News and features that interest girls are movies,

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news about people, entertainment, other than movies, and fashion news.

- Exposure to daily newspapers has little bearing on television viewing.
- Age or grade level seems to be more of a factor for television viewing than for newspaper reading. As students get older more of them spend less time and watch television less frequently but they are more inclined to watch the more serious programs such as news and documentaries.
- One in five students who say they receive no daily newspaper in the home nevertheless say they get local and national and international news from newspapers—nine out of 10 from television, and eight out of 10 from radio.
- Nearly half (43%) of the non-reader students rely upon newspapers nonetheless for "sales bargains of things you wear or use."

Purpose and Methodology

Purpose of the survey was to determine the proportion of public school students, seventh to twelfth grades, who regularly read (two or more times per week) the Times-Dispatch, Richmond's morning newspaper. It sought to determine what features or types of news interested them, and what exposure they had to other daily newspapers and to television. Among non-readers of the Times-Dispatch, the survey sought to determine how various information was received, exposure to television and other newspapers.

Respondents included a sample of 1,048 students randomly selected by class. Each student completed a self-administered questionnaire in class under the supervision of his or her homeroom teacher. Those students who said they read the morning Times-Dispatch were asked to complete one questionnaire while the others were asked to complete another. Both groups were given the same television questions. Questionnaires were completed in early February 1978.

The sampling method provided representation of all public schools and all classes, 7th to 12 grades, in the three school districts of the Times-Dispatch principal home delivery area. In this area—Richmond City, Chesterfield and Henrico counties—circulation per 100 households for the Times-Dispatch is 44; evening News Leader is 51; estimated net combined weekday is 72; Sunday is 72.

Ninety-five percent of those sampled responded to the questionnaires. Of the 1,048 who responded, 547 said they were morning newspaper readers, 501 said they were not—of all, 47 percent were boys, 52 percent were girls, 1 percent didn't say. The sampling procedure insured similar representation within each grade level.

Exposure to Daily Newspaper

Nine out of 10 students are exposed to one or more newspapers regularly. One-half read the morning newspaper at least twice per week. Although some differences are observed in amount of exposure among grade levels, there appears to be no increase in newspaper exposure or readership as grade levels go up. Seventh graders are as frequent readers as twelfth graders. (See Table 1)

Table 1

Daily Newspaper Readership and Exposure

Grade	General Age Range	Read Times-Dispatch	Receive Only News Leader or Other Dailies	Do Not Read Times-Daily, Do Not Receive Any Newspapers	Number Interviews = 100%
7th	12-13	56%	34%	10%	182
8	13-14	45	43	12	197
9	14-15	55	29	16	157
10	15-16	53	38	9	161
11	16-17	48	34	18	178
12	17-18	57	35	8	173
All Grades		52	36	12	1,048

Exposure to Television

Generally, the amount or frequency of daily newspaper reading has little bearing on television viewing. According to this survey, the heavy newspaper reading student does as much or as little television viewing as does the light or the non-newspaper reader. Grade level (or age) does affect frequency of and amount of time spent on viewing. As grade levels go up, television time and frequency go down. For example, 16 percent more 7th graders watch TV every day than do all graders, while there are 13 percent fewer 12th graders (100-87) watching TV every day. (See Table 2)

Table 2

Index of Television Viewing

Grade	Watch Every Day	Watch Three or More Hours Per Day
7th	116	114
8	108	104
9	108	111
10	97	88
11	85	90
12	87	90
Average All Grades =	100	100

Types of TV Programs Usually Watched

Intensity of newspaper reading has little effect on the types of programs students usually watch. Sports is the exception. Proportionately more readers usually watch sports shows than non-readers.

Movies, by far, lead all other types of programs usually watched. Comedy shows and sports follow. There are no significant differences in level of viewing among grades. Seventh graders show more preference for game shows and cartoons than do 12th graders. Older students show greater interest in news programs and documentaries. The proportion of 7th graders usually watching documentaries is one-half that of the 12th graders. (See Tables 3 and 4)

Table 3

Types of Programs Usually Watched
(Average all types = 100)

Program Type	All Grades
Movies	170
Comedy	163
Sports	119
Game	113
Police	104
Cartoons	104
Soap Operas	78
Song and Dance	61
News	61
Documentaries	33

Table 4

Types of Programs Usually Watched

Program Type	Grades					
	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Movies	99	99	102	98	104	101
Comedy	98	102	102	103	97	98
Sports	98	105	98	103	94	97
Game	120	103	115	95	93	77
Police	120	104	114	98	88	80
Cartoons	138	116	109	93	75	70
Soap Operas	83	100	102	110	117	90
Song and Dance	112	109	103	103	85	97
News	82	82	103	91	94	142
Documentaries	100	56	72	89	94	200
Average all grades for each program type = 100						
Students interviewed =	182	197	157	161	178	173

How Non-Readers Acquire Information

Somehow a majority of students who neither read nor have newspapers in their homes manage to refer to newspapers for certain information. Radio and television hold strong leads in how students get most of the hard news—i.e., local, state, national and world news—while the spread between media is not as great for other types of news. (See Table 5)

Reasons For Not Reading Morning Newspaper

The newspaper "not brought into my home" was the reason a majority of students gave for not regularly reading the morning Times-Dispatch. Apparently students rely upon others to bring the newspaper into the home. If it is available, they are likely to read it. Only 22 percent said they had no time to read it; 10 percent said they were not interested. As students mature, however, more of them find lack of time as the reason for not reading. Seventy-four percent of the students who do not read the morning Times-Dispatch, however, receive other daily newspapers in the home—70 percent receive the evening News Leader. (See Table 6)

Student Readers of Morning Newspaper

Fifty-two percent of the students say they read the morning Times-Dispatch at least twice per week. Proportionately more boys read (58%) than girls (47%). Readership at grade levels varies but there does not appear to be a trend in either direction. The ninth grade, however, shows proportionately more girls reading than boys.

Seven out of 10 boys or girls who read the morning Times-Dispach also read at least another daily newspaper. Girls seem to read more newspapers than boys.

Table 5

Students Who Do Not Read Times-Dispatch
Or Receive Any Other Newspapers
(All Grades)

	Usually Get Most Information About:				
Source	Nation & World	Richmond & State	Sales of Things Wear or Use	Entertainment (Movies, Concerts)	Sports
Newspaper	22%	21%	43%	51%	30%
TV	92	86	63	59	83
Radio	83	74	41	64	46
Teachers	29	21	--	--	--
Friends	--	43	--	57	42
News Magazine	22	--	--	--	--
Shoppers	--	--	17	--	--
Posters	--	--	--	13	--
Scholastic Magazine	4	--	--	--	--
Other	6	--	21	3	2

Students interviewed = 126

Table 6

Reasons Why Students Do Not Read Morning Times-Dispatch

Grade	Newspaper Not Brought Into Home	No Time	Not Interested	Other Reasons	Number Interviews = 100%
7th	55%	16%	19%	10%	80
8	69	16	9	6	108
9	44	21	20	15	71
10	69	18	1	12	76
11	61	24	10	5	92
12	49	40	3	8	74
All Grades	59	22	10	9	501

Table 7

Readership of Newspapers

	Read Morning Times-Dispatch		Percent of Morning Times-Dispatch Readers Who Also Read Other Daily Newspapers	
Grade	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
7th	60%	53%	84%	73%
8	48	44	66	71
9	53	57	64	84
10	62	45	74	62
11	60	37	73	82
12	65	51	65	76
All Grades	58	47	71	74

Total Boys = 287 Total Girls = 258

Table 8

Median Time Spent Reading Morning Newspaper

	Minutes	
Grade	Boys	Girls
7th	20	22
8	20	20
9	23	21
10	19	18
11	22	19
12	23	24
All Grades	21	21

Fifty-seven percent of both sexes read the Richmond evening newspaper, the News Leader. (See Table 7)

On the average, boys and girls who read the morning newspaper spend 21 minutes reading it. Tenth graders of both sexes spend the least amount of time (18 minutes) while the 12th graders spend slightly more time. Widest deviation occurs (6 minutes) between girls in 12th and 10 grades. (See Table 8)

Seventy percent of the boys and girls read the Richmond morning newspaper by first turning to a specific page or section. Grade levels seem to make little difference; therefore, data for grade levels is not shown. (See Table 9)

Boys turn to sports. Girls turn to comics and entertainment pages in that order. As grade levels get higher, there seems to be a greater interest in sports among girls. Interest in comics lowers as girls and boys get older. (See Table 10)

Table 9

How Morning Newspaper Is Read
(All Grades)

	Start at Front Page, Go Straight Through	Turn to Specific Section	Some Other Way
Boys	22%	74%	4%
Girls	29	66	5
Both	25	70	5

Total Boys = 287 Total Girls = 258

Table 10

Page or Section Turned to First
(Among Those Who First Turn to Section)

	Sports		Comics		Entertainment		Other	
Grade	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
7th	55%	6%	28%	58%	3%	12%	14%	24%
8	63	12	14	43	6	21	17	24
9	82	10	9	56	--	24	9	10
10	75	17	11	48	--	21	14	14
11	74	24	8	19	5	19	13	38
12	75	31	19	31	3	19	3	19
All Grades	71	16	15	44	3	19	11	21

Total Boys = 212 Total Girls = 171

Although there are variations of readership of specific comics among grade levels, no discernible trend appears. All grade levels seem to follow the same general reading patterns. Girls appear more comics-oriented overall, leading the boys in percent reading in seven out of 13 comic strips, and when they lead the boys, they lead them by a much wider margin than when the boys lead them. Dennis the Menace, Blondie, Marmaduke and Beetle Bailey are clearly the leaders for both boys and girls. (See Table 11)

Among students, both boys and girls, hard news (local, state, national and international) becomes more interesting as grade levels go higher.

Movies and other entertainment hold tremendously high interest among boys and girls—particularly among girls—and at all grade levels.

Sports news has very high interest among boys and substantial interest among girls. And as girls get older, more of them find sports news interesting.

Table 11

Comics Read Regularly
(Percent of Those Reading Morning Times-Dispatch)
(All Grades)

	Boys & Girls	Boys	Girls
Dennis the Menace	72%	67%	79%
Blondie	71	65	79
Marmaduke	64	62	66
Beetle Bailey	62	63	61
Snuffy Smith	45	43	47
Funky Winkerbean	41	42	40
Nancy	39	33	45
Andy Capp	32	31	33
Mark Trail	27	29	24
Dr. Smock	26	27	26
Gil Thorp	19	20	17
Judge Parker	15	8	22
Best Seller Showcase	12	14	10
Students interviewed =	547	287	258

Table 12

Kinds of News and Features of Interest To Students Who Read Morning Newspaper

	Boys						
	All Grades	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Sports	85%	88%	89%	90%	87%	77%	83%
Movies	82	80	93	83	83	83	73
Local News	69	63	73	74	59	75	71
Entertainment Other Than Movies	55	49	64	55	50	58	54
State News	45	39	55	38	35	54	50
News About People	44	45	45	26	37	52	52
Music	37	24	25	36	43	50	44
National, International News	33	25	23	36	33	35	48
News About Things to Buy	22	29	18	26	17	23	19
Editorials	18	25	16	10	7	19	31
How-To-Do-It Features	17	25	18	14	13	17	6
Fashion News	8	10	5	14	9	10	2
Other Topics	17	22	18	12	17	13	17
Students interviewed =	287	51	44	42	46	52	52

	Girls						
	All Grades	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th
Movies	96%	96%	98%	100%	95%	100%	87%
News About People	72	61	64	65	79	88	83
Entertainment Other Than Movies	69	57	67	72	77	71	72
Fashion News	64	59	56	67	67	71	70
Sports	60	53	58	70	67	65	54
Local News	60	49	60	47	59	76	72
Music	58	47	47	63	59	82	59
News About Things to Buy	49	55	40	44	41	56	59
State News	40	31	36	40	33	47	54
National, International News	24	6	27	19	21	29	43
How-To-Do-It Features	21	25	18	28	15	18	20
Editorials	17	12	13	21	15	18	22
Other Topics	24	25	33	23	21	18	20
Students interviewed =	258	51	45	43	39	34	46

News about people generates more interest as boys and girls get older. Girls have substantially more interest about people than boys do.

Fashion news ranks high with girls across all grade levels and as girls mature their interest becomes even stronger.

Girls seem to have a greater diversification of interest in newspaper topics than boys.

As boys and girls mature, their interest in news and features of music increases. As we might expect, more girls than boys have interest in this subject.

Although there seems to be no noticeable correlation between age and readership of items about things to buy, girls are substantially more interested in this subject than boys.

Boys, however, are more interested in hard news than girls. How-to-do-it features interest more 7th grade boys than 12th grade boys. This is not as apparent among girls. (See Table 12)

Thirty percent of the boys indicated a dislike for fashion news while 19 percent of the girls indicated a similar dislike for editorials.

Girls seem to spread their dislikes over more types of news and features than boys. This seems to bear out the notion seen earlier that girls are more diversified in their newspaper reading preferences. (See Table 13)

Table 13

Kinds of News and Features Liked Least
(All Grades)

	Boys	Girls
None	36%	29%
Local News	1	2
State News	2	5
National, International News	6	16
Sports	1	10
News About People	2	2
News About Things to Buy	2	3
Fashion News	30	3
How-To-Do-It Features	6	8
Music	4	--
Movies	--	2
Entertainment Other Than Movies	--	--
Editorials	9	19
Students interviewed =	287	258

Conclusions

Although the newspaper reading habits of Richmond area public school children may not represent those of school children eleswhere, certain characteristics are worth noting. Unlike adults who primarily prefer to read a newspaper from beginning to end, children select the place in the newspaper which carries the information of greatest interest. Children are not likely to use their money to buy daily newspapers. Instead, they rely upon adults to provide them with the opportunity to read. Once this happens, children rely upon newspapers as most adults do. To create future adult readers, therefore, it is important for newspapers to continue to put even greater emphasis on home delivery sales—to have the newspaper available in the home for children to see and read. ■

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A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

ROUTE TO:
Editorial ________
Promotion ________
Circulation ________
Advertising ________
Production ________
Personnel________
Other________

The Comic Strip Problem

By Philip Meyer

HIGHLIGHTS: Which comic strips should an editor drop and which should he keep? Beginning with the idea that this question can be answered by knowing how many people read each strip, this report discusses eight different strategies that editors can use to fine tune their selection of comics.

and

Effects of a Year-Long Series of Energy Articles

By Eric A. Abbott and Stacy L. Richardson

HIGHLIGHTS: Readers of a year-long series of articles on energy in a morning newspaper increased their understanding of both conceptual and home-related energy information. However, overall gains compared to a control group—though statistically significant—were modest. Results show that although more than 80 percent of respondents think the energy situation is very serious or somewhat serious, the average newspaper reader does not have a good grasp of local energy issues. There is some evidence that those who read the energy series articles rate energy as a more important national problem than those who do not.

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The Comic Strip Problem

By Philip Meyer

Philip Meyer is Director of News Research for Knight-Ridder Newspapers Inc.

Sooner or later, every editor faces the comic strip problem or its equivalent. It represents a large and complex class of problems involving the editorial mix and selection of content to motivate the largest number of readers to purchase and use the newspaper. The decision requires a wide array of choices.

When an editor decides to add a new comic strip to the newspaper, he or she must decide which strip to drop to make room. The traditional way to decide which one to drop is to conduct a survey to see which strip has the smallest number of readers. Dropping a strip on the basis of such a straightforward *referendum* may be a better method than rolling dice, but it contains some hazards:

- The least read comic strip may be followed very intensely by the few who do read it. It might even be their main reason for getting the newspaper.
- The least read strip may be ranked higher among some sub-group which the newspaper's publishing plan has designated as a special target.
- The least read strip might be a key element in some undetected pattern of comic strip preferences. Taking it out may upset an existing balance in this pattern.
- Better read strips may contribute less in net readership because of duplication patterns. The least read strip is more valuable than it appears if its readers read only it and none other.

The Philadelphia Inquirer conducted a comic strip survey designed to deal with each of these possibilities.

Data Collection

A sample of 1,000 home delivery subscribers was drawn with the help of the Circulation Department. Each home in the sample was sent two questionnaires: one to be filled out by any adult and one by any child in the household. There were 286 responses, including 51 from children and teenagers. Median age of the sample was 43. Among adults the median age was 50. According to other market surveys, the median age of adult Inquirer readers in the Philadelphia SMSA is in the 45-47 range. Because of the low response rate and the bias toward older readers, the sample is not representative of readers in general.

The questionnaire allowed respondents to rate each comic strip read on a seven-point scale. A section from each strip was reproduced in the margin to aid in recall. This method produced higher readership figures than an earlier in-home survey in which the respondent was handed a list of strip titles and asked which ones he or she made a point of reading.

Factor Analysis

Use of the rating scales makes it possible to search for patterns of readership with *factor analysis*. This is a standard statistical device for reducing a large number of variables to a few simple clusters. When used to analyze newspaper content, it is a quick way to spot clusters of readership. We define readership as clustered when those people who read one feature in a group tend predictably to read others in the same group. Factor analysis is the device for spotting the groups. In the case of the Philadelphia comics, it turned up three of them:

1. Dramatic serials—People who read Steve Canyon tend also to read Juliet Jones and the other strips that are based on a continuing narrative.
2. Sophisticated humor—Readership of 10 strips which seem to share an element of subtlety and occasional social comment was clustered.
3. Light humor—The remaining 13 comics are mainly one-shot sight gags and simple jokes.

If we had started out to classify comic strips without doing a survey at all, we might have discerned the same grouping. This classification was arrived at by our readers, through their own reading patterns, and is not based directly on the objective charactristics of the strips. It shows that the comic section can be thought of as, in effect, three sections. Taken with what is already known about the need to segment newspaper audiences to appeal to specialized groups, this division suggests that each group of comics ought to be considered separately.

The stability of this kind of grouping can be tested by comparing the Philadelphia factor clusters with those reached by the same method in a different market. A factor analysis of readership of comic strips in The Miami Herald shows that the same basic pattern prevails. There were few continued serials in The Miami Herald at the time its survey was taken, but those that it did have fell in the same cluster with other strips that dealt generally with sports and adventure. There is also a grouping of family comics with simple, one-shot gags and the third group of strips with more sophisticated humor. The Miami findings tend to confirm that there are indeed three separate comic strip audiences.

Managing the Three Groups

Knowing that readers tend to organize their comic reading habits around these three clusters leads to interesting possiblities. For example, the three types of comics could be segregated on the comic pages so that readers interested primarily in any one type could find all the strips of that kind together. We know from other research that readers tend to scan the newspaper purposively. Anything we can do to improve the newspaper's efficiency as an information retrieval device will help them and make the newspaper more useful.

The number of strips in each category could also be adjusted to reflect the proportion of readers primarily interested in each group. This proportional representation scheme has a gut-level appeal and could serve in the absence of a more complicated model.

Each of the Philadelphia respondents was classified as preferring one of the three comic groups by comparing his or her average rating scores for each group. A strip not read counted as zero and was included in the base for averaging. The distribution of preferences is shown in Table 1. In the simplest form of *proportional representation*, the number of strips in each class would reflect that distribution. Other criteria are possible, however. It might be that the amount of money spent for each strip should be apportioned instead.

Table 1

Types of Comics Preferred by Philadelphia Inquirer Readers

Dramatic serials	28%
Sophisticated humor	23
One-shot gags	47
Unable to classify	2
	100

It should be noted, of course, that reader preferences are conditioned to some extent by what they already find in the newspaper. In Miami, for example, readers were offered few continued soap opera strips. The proportion preferring those strips was correspondingly smaller than in Philadelphia. It also might be wise to depart from the proportional representation formula if one of the comic types is favored by a demographic group which the publishing strategy calls for developing. The three types of strips do attract somewhat different followings.

Dramatic serials appeal to older readers and those who have been long term readers of the newspaper. It is the only category of comic whose readership is strongly associated with the daily reading habit. The sophisticated humor strips appeal to new readers and young people. They are the favorite of 38 percent of persons under age 40 compared to only 10 percent of people who are older. The often-targeted off-and-on readers like this group more than daily readers do. Younger readers are somewhat more drawn to the one-shot gag comics than older readers, especially if they are heavy television viewers. The attraction is fairly even across different levels of education.

Measuring Intensity

With the groupings established, it is an easy matter to rank the different comics within groups by their *readership* and by the *intensity* of that readership. This is done in Table 2. Readership is shown as a percent of all persons who read any comic. The intensity score is simply the average on a seven-point scale among readers of the indicated comic strip. The readership and intensity scores can be combined by multiplying them. This procedure yields an index number which may be thought of as a comic strip's readership discounted by

Table 2

Readership Rankings Within Comic Categories

	Readership	Intensity	Index*
Dick Tracy	70%	4.7	330
Winnie Winkle	68	4.8	325
Gasoline Alley	67	4.5	299
Mark Trail	58	4.8	279
Juliet Jones	53	4.8	251
Steve Canyon	51	4.8	242
Horrible Hager	86%	5.5	470
Momma	87	5.2	453
Catfish	77	4.7	366
Animal Crackers	77	4.5	348
Broom Hilda	79	4.2	334
Funky Winkerbean	74	4.1	303
Kelly & Duke	72	3.9	282
Tank McNamara	67	3.9	265
P. T. Bimbo	67	3.7	247
Travels with Farley	56	3.6	200
There Oughta Be A Law	89%	5.8	515
Heathcliff	89	5.6	496
Fred Basset	91	5.4	488
Rivets	88	5.2	455
Charmers	76	5.3	405
Amy	81	4.8	388
Dumplings	78	4.9	382
Freddy	83	4.6	381
Big George	79	4.7	373
A Little Leary	65	5.2	338
Ms. Augusta	73	4.5	328
Toppix	48	4.0	195

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*Readership multiplied by Intensity to produce an index of intensity adjusted readership. Multiplication was performed before rounding the numbers in the first two columns.

its intensity. A perfect score would be 700, representing a strip which was read by everybody and rated seven by everyone.

The range on the index was from 195 for Toppix to 515 for There Oughta Be A Law. From Table 2 we can see that if we followed the traditional referendum model for dropping comic strips, Toppix would be the one to drop. If only intensity were taken into account, Travels With Farley would be dropped. Using the index of readership and intensity, Toppix would be dropped.

Once the index numbers are established, it is an easy matter to look at them by target group, for example, a breakdown of the population by age and education. An editor interested in reaching a particular target group would scan these columns for strips that have visibly higher appeal to target group members. For example, Tank McNamara has only a mediocre ranking in the referendum reported in Table 2, but it scores much higher among young people, particularly college-educated young people. Since newspapers are worried about younger readers, Tank McNamara would be a much stronger candidate for retention than the referendum indicates.

The McCombs Model

We have now succeeded in complicating what at first glance appears to be a fairly simple problem. It is possible to complicate matters even more. One factor which should not be overlooked is the degree to which each comic strip attracts a unique audience or an audience which is already drawn to the newspaper by the other comic strips. Maxwell McCombs has proposed a decision model for feature selection which sorts features into four categories: those with high readership which is isolated, i.e., does not overlap with readership of other features; features with high readership which are clustered with the readership of other features; features of low readership which are isolated; and features with low readership which are clustered.*

To use the McCombs model we must classify the comics according to the extent to which the readership is isolated or clustered. One way to do this is by inspection of the intercorrelations of readership for the strips. There is an easier way to make this judgment. We have already factor analyzed the comic ratings, and the factor scores are straightforward indicators of clustering. The higher the factor score for a particular comic, the more that comic's readership correlates with readership of its group as a whole.

For an operational definition, we can classify a comic in the top half of its group as clustered and one in the bottom half as isolated. Readership can also be cut at the median for each group. Following this procedure it is a simple matter to classify each comic according to its position in the McCombs model (Table 3).

The most desirable comics, those with high readership and whose readership is relatively isolated, are Winnie Winkle, Dick Tracy, Gasoline Alley, Momma, There Ought To Be A Law, Rivets and Fred Bassett. The least desirable are Steve Canyon, Juliet Jones, Mark Trail, Funky Winkerbean, A Little Leary, Big George and Dumplings.

This model can be combined with the referendum model or the proportional representation model to further refine the choices. For example, the proportional representation model tells us that sophisticated humor is over-represented. The only member of this group to fall into the undesirable cell of the McCombs model is Funky Winkerbean. On the other hand, we might wish to use a simple referendum as the tie breaker in the McCombs model, in which case Steve 'Canyon would be dropped because it is the least read of the strips in the undesirable cell of the McCombs model.

Table 3

The McCombs Model

	High Readership	Low Readership
Isolated	Winnie Winkle Dick Tracy Gasoline Alley Momma There Oughta Be A Law Rivets Fred Bassett	P. T. Bimbo Kelly & Duke Travels with Farley Tank McNamara Ms. Augusta Toppix Freddy
Clustered	Broom Hilda Catfish Animal Crackers Horrible Hager Amy Heathcliff Charmers	Steve Canyon Juliet Jones Mark Trail Funky Winkerbean A Little Leary Big George Dumplings

The Max 4 Model

Modern data processing makes it possible to look at the problem of overlapping readership in a more precise way, provided one has a theory that tells one what to look for. Presumably there is a threshold number of comic strips which, if read and given the maximum rating, will cause a reader to stay with the newspaper. A person addicted to less than this threshold number would be significantly more likely to drop the newspaper than a person who is devoted to this number of comic strips or more. It should be possible to design longitudinal research to determine the threshold number.

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*"What to Drop and What to Keep—A Scientific Procedure for Evaluating Standing Features," ANPA News Research Report No. 4, July 22, 1977.

In the absence of such research, we can only guess, but the guessing game can at least start with an inspection of the number of strips read and given the maximum rating. In the Philadelphia study, the greatest number of people gave the maximum rating to fewer than three comic strips. Another third gave the maximum rating to three to five comic strips. And the most devoted third bestowed this honor on six or more comic strips. The distribution shows a sharp break between three and four top rated comic strips, and it therefore seems reasonable to suppose that we ought to make it our goal to have as many people as possible give the maximum rating to at least four comic strips.

We can call this model the Max 4 model (Max as in maximum, not Max McCombs). The question then becomes which comic strip can be dropped with the least reduction in the number of readers who give four or more comic strips the maximum rating.

This question may be answered through a straightforward simulation. We simply count the number of readers who give the maximum rating to four comic strips. Then, for each strip in turn, we discard its top ratings and count the number of top-rated strips remaining for each person. The task is simple enough if one has access to an interactive computer system, thus avoiding the need to make 28 trips to the batching counter. The outcome of these calculations is shown in Table 4. If Heathcliff were dropped, the number of people who give the maximum rating to four comics would be reduced by eight and a half percent. If Travels with Farley, Gasoline Alley, Amy or Toppix were dropped, the number of persons showing this intense devotion to at least four comics would not be reduced at all.

The Max 4 model can also be combined with other models to break ties. If propositional representation were the tie breaking criteria, Travels with Farley would be dropped because it is a member of an overrepresented classification. If the referendum were the tie breaker, Toppix would be dropped.

Table 4

The Max 4 Model

Horrible Hager	65.%
Catfish	4.3
Momma	4.3
Tank McNamara	3.7
Animal Crackers	2.2
Funky Winkerbean	2.2
Broom Hilda	1.4
P. T. Bimbo	0.8
Kelly & Duke	0.8
Travels with Farley	0
Juliet Jones	2.2
Dick Tracy	1.4
Winnie Winkle	1.4
Steve Canyon	0.8
Mark Trail	0.8
Gasoline Alley	0
Heathcliff	8.5
There Oughta Be A Law	6.5
Fred Basset	5.3
A Little Leary	4.3
Charmers	3.7
Dumplings	3.7
Rivets	2.8
Freddy	2.2
Big George	1.4
Ms. Augusta	0.8
Amy	0
Toppix	0

Bimodal Distributions

One other potential variable ought to be considered. Some newspaper features are controversial, and the controversy draws readers to them irrespective of whether the features are liked or disliked. The tipoff is a bimodal distribution in the ratings. If any comic strip has a large number of 1 ratings balanced by a large number of 7 ratings and not very many ratings in the middle, it means that this is a strip which is both loved and hated and read by the holders of both emotions. It would, however, have only a mediocre average. Therefore, it is important to inspect the frequency distributions. Among the Philadelphia comics, there were two basic patterns. A few strips showed normally distributed evaluations. Most were skewed to the low side. In other words, people who read a strip at all tend to like it a lot. There were no cases of a clear bimodal distribution. It seems quite possible, however, that such a distribution might be found with other comics in other newspapers.*

Summary and Conclusion

We have in the course of this analysis proposed eight basic models for rating comic strips. They are summarized in Table 5. In only one case does the outcome depart very radically from the outcome of the traditional referendum. Funky Winkerbean, read by 74 percent of the comic reading audience, would not be a likely candidate for dropping if the referendum were the standard. It is the comic to drop if the McCombs model is applied, using the proportional representation role as the tie breaker.

In all of the other models the comic to drop is one that rates at or near the bottom of the referendum. Editors and researchers who have been choosing comics on the basis of the referendum model may take some comfort in this. It is an easy test to apply and it is not ambiguous. Not much damage will be done, at least in

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*I am grateful to Mike Kleibrink for pointing out the potential importance of bimodal distribution in the rating of comic strips.

the short term, if the referendum model is followed. Its chief danger is that it can blind decision makers to the problem of segmentation and the desirability of reaching strategic target groups.

If applied over time, the referendum model would lead to the gradual elimination of the dramatic soap opera strips, and since these strips are associated with retention of the newspaper, that could be a serious mistake. The problem is easily averted, however, by making selections within the three basic groups and taking care always to provide something for the readers of dramatic serials, sophisticated humor, and the simple family strips. Editorial decision makers who lack the resources or the patience for the fine tuning provided by the more complicated models will probably not be led too far astray by the referendum so long as a rough segmentation is maintained. ■

Table 5

Outcomes of the Decision Models

Model	Comic to Drop
1. Referendum	Toppix
2. Intensity	Tavels with Farley
3. Readership/Intensity	Toppix
4. McCombs-Referendum	Steve Canyon
5. McCombs-P.R.	Funky Winkerbean
6. P.R.-Referendum	Travels with Farley
7. Max 4-P.R.	Travels with Farley
8. Max 4-Referendum	Toppix

Effects of a Year-Long Series of Energy Articles

By Eric A. Abbott and Stacy L. Richardson

Abbott is associate professor, Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa State University. He is research director for the Energy Information Project, which developed the energy articles, and was a visiting professor in the College of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison, when the research was done. Richardson utilized this research for part of her M.S. thesis, and served as a graduate research assistant on the project at Iowa State University. This report was funded by the College of Engineering, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Iowa State University; and a grant from the ANPA News Research Center.

Since 1973 the average U.S. newspaper has given major coverage to energy problems—to shortages, legislation and attitudes. The New York Times alone runs about six energy-related stories in every issue of its newspaper, and it ran as many as 14 stories per issue during the Arab oil embargo in 1973-74.

One result of this coverage—plus not finding gasoline at the pumps—has been that Americans believe energy is a serious problem facing this country. More than 80 percent of the newspaper subscribers studied in Madison, Wisconsin, during 1976-77 said they felt the energy situation was "very serious" or "somewhat serious."

However, other sources indicate that Americans may not know some very basic facts about energy. A 1977 Gallup Poll showed that more than 40 percent of Americans did not know the United States needs to import oil. More than one-fourth thought nuclear power plants can explode like an atomic bomb.

In response to such evidence, a joint venture was set up between the College of Engineering of the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Wisconsin State Journal, Madison's morning and Sunday newspaper, to provide a year-long series of articles explaining city, state and national energy problems. The series articles were written by Thomas J. Murray, a university science writer, and Steven T. Lovejoy, an energy reporter for the State Journal.

The articles totaled about 100,000 words and ran in 15 full-page installments usually beginning on page one of the Sunday newspaper (circulation 122,000). The series ran from September, 1976 through June, 1977. A pre-test before the series began and a post-test following the series measured changes in energy knowledge and attitudes.

Series articles attempted to explain where energy comes from, how it is harnessed, and how it is distributed. Topics included: home heating, Madison residential energy use, solar energy, natural gas supply and policy, electricity production, nuclear power, energy costs of food and coal gasification. Each article was tailored specifically for the Madison area audience, with local examples and figures where appropriate.

Each article contained pictures, graphs or illustrations in addition to copy. Each also contained the series logo: *Energy: Your Decisions.* The series was not promoted by the State Journal, but did appear at about the same location each month.

Results in Brief

- Readers of the series did improve their knowledge of energy more than did newspaper readers who did not see the articles. Gains in knowledge were statistically significant, although they averaged less than one point on a 16-item knowledge test. However, when overall levels of knowledge were examined after one year of the series, the average reader still lacked basic information needed to make common energy decisions in the home and community.

- Older readers (65 and older) scored lowest on energy knowledge before the series and improved their scores least despite the fact that they were about as likely as other groups to read one of the articles. Women scored lower than men on energy knowledge before the series, but improved their scores as much as did men following the series. Women did best on questions related to home energy use, while men also did well on more technical or conceptual questions. Highly educated subscribers were more likely to improve their energy scores.

- Most readers and non-readers of the series look to solar energy as a future source of home heating; the percentages nearly doubled between 1976 and 1977. Readers are also becoming more likely to believe they can live comfortably with less energy. Young readers are most optimistic about solar energy and most cautious about nuclear energy. Men tend to be more optimistic about nuclear energy than women.

- Readers of the energy series were more likely than non-readers to name the energy situation as the No. 1 national problem among a list of six choices (crime, unemployment, the economy, national defense, the environment).

Research Procedures

Results are based on a study of newspaper readers in Dane County, Wisconsin, which includes the city of Madison. Prior to the series 1,235 newspaper subscribers to the Wisconsin State Journal and a control group of 200 newspaper readers who do not subscribe to the State Journal were sent a questionnaire by mail. The questionnaire asked about energy attitudes and current home energy use, and included a 16-item energy knowledge test. The response rate for this survey exceeded 85 percent.

Following the series in July, 1977 all persons who responded to the original survey were contacted again by mail. In addition, a sample of 300 other State Journal subscribers and a control group of 200 newspaper subscribers who did not subscribe to the State Journal were contacted. The response rate exceeded 80 percent.

The high rate of response was due both to the importance readers attached to the energy situation and to survey techniques. Each respondent received a personally typed letter signed by the research director. Envelopes were hand-typed and large colorful stamps were used on the letter and the return envelope. A reminder postcard was mailed one week after the first mailing, and two subsequent reminder mailings which included a questionnaire were used.

This method of sampling permitted the measurement of energy knowledge gained for exactly the same persons from 1976 to 1977, yet it also permitted measurement of effects from receiving the questionnaire itself in 1976. Receiving a questionnaire on a topic makes some readers more likely to read information on that topic.

The majority of newspaper subscribers who do not take the Wisconsin State Journal read the afternoon newspaper, the Madison Capital Times. Madison residents tend to be above-average in education. Therefore, results may tend to overestimate energy knowledge for other areas of the country.

Knowledge Gain

In order to test whether or not respondents learned from the series, the percentage of improvement (or decrease) for each test question from 1976 to 1977 was measured. Results were compared for all persons interviewed, for all men and all women separately, and for those who could recall having seen a series article versus those who could not.

Readership was difficult to measure because a year passed during the series, and hundreds of other articles about energy had appeared during the same time period. Respondents were specifically asked if they could recall the series articles with the logo *Energy: Your Decisions*. Sixty-one percent of the men and 55 percent of the women responding said they recalled reading at least one of the series articles.

Improvements for both men and women who recalled reading at least one article are statistically significant. In addition, those who could recall seeing a series article improved their overall scores on 12 out of the 16 test items, and decreased their scores on only two. Scores on the other two did not change. Those who could not recall seeing a series article improved their scores on nine out of sixteen items, and decreased their scores on six. One did not change.

Despite the fact that there was a consistent trend toward higher scores for those who could recall seeing a series article, overall gains on the 16-item test averaged less than one point. Thus, the series did not achieve any dramatic gains in knowledge.

To study which types of questions resulted in the most learning, the test questions were divided into two groups. One group, which included questions such as "Does closing draperies at night save energy?" was classified as questions relating to home uses of energy. The other group included conceptual and technical questions about energy in general ("What percentage of Wisconsin's electricity comes from nuclear power?"). This analysis showed that men and women who remembered reading at least one of the energy series articles did significantly better than those who did not for home-related questions. However, only men who recalled an article also did better on technical and conceptual questions. Women who did not read the series did slightly better than women who did for the technical questions.

Table 1

Improvements in Test Scores

Home Related Questions	Change from 1976 to 1977	Technical/Conceptual Questions	Change from 1976 to 1977
Men		**Men**	
Remember seeing article	6.2	Remember seeing article	5.5
Did not remember article	2.4	Did not remember article	2.8
Women		**Women**	
Remember seeing article	5.1	Remember seeing article	4.1
Did not remember article	1.4	Did not remember article	5.3

Receiving a questionnaire about energy might well be expected to generate interest in the topic. For this reason, a control group was included in the 1977 survey which did not receive the questionnaire in 1976, but in all other respects was the same as the 1976 group. Results show that those in the control group who could recall seeing at least one of the series articles still learned significantly more than those who did not (5.8 percent gain versus a 2.0 percent gain). Thus, it appears that some learning took place from the series among average readers whose attention was not called to the topic in advance.

Socio-economic factors, particularly age, sex and education, were found to be predictors of energy learning and attitudes. Respondents in the 65 and older age group consistently scored lower in energy knowledge before and after the series than did the younger groups. This is an important finding since older people and those on fixed incomes often live in homes needing insulation and other energy-saving devices. Women, too, might be expected to be responsible for many energy-related decisions in the home, but women scored 27 percent lower than men on the 1976 test, and caught up only slighlty on the 1977 post-test.

Not reading the series was not a factor in explaining low scores for older people. Those 65 and older were as likely as the 20 to 40 age group to report seeing at least one series article. A total of 58 percent of respondents in both the 20 to 40 age group and the 65 and older group remembered reading at least one article in the series, while 68 percent of those in the 41 to 64 age group remembered reading at least one article.

Education was found to be an important knowledge predictor for both men and women. In general, scores improved as education went up. There were steadily increasing gains in knowledge for both those who saw at least one series article and those who did not except in the lowest education groups. However, the gains were much larger for those who saw at least one series article. Men still scored higher than women at all educational levels, a finding which indicates that the differences between men and women are not due to the fact that men generally have more education.

Adequacy of Energy Knowledge

Examination of the individual knowledge test items shows that the average newspaper reader still lacked basic information about energy one year after the series began. At one extreme, nearly all respondents knew that closing draperies at night will save heat during the winter (more than 90 percent for both the group seeing the series and the group not seeing the series). However, on many other items, post-test scores were much lower:

- Eighty-seven percent of series readers and 93 percent of non-readers did not know that Wisconsin is already well into the nuclear power age with 35 percent of its electricity coming from nuclear sources. Most thought it was one percent or eight percent, the two other choices given. (In 1976, only six percent of readers and four percent of non-readers selected the correct answer.)

- Only about half of all respondents could identify air conditioning as the factor causing peak electric power demands in Wisconsin.

- More than one-third of the series readers and almost half of the non-series readers did not know that the United States was importing more oil now than before the 1973 Arab Oil Boycott. Many said they weren't sure.

These results show that a large number of newspaper readers still do not have a grasp of energy facts necessary to participate in making public policy decisions. For example, many communities currently are struggling with a decision on how to structure electric rates and conserve electricity. With half of their readers unaware that air conditioning is the single most important factor necessitating construction of new power plants, public dialogue on the question is certain to be hampered.

Here are the 16 questions from the test. Correct answers are indicated after each question. The number following each answer represents the number of times the particular question was discussed in the series. The percent is the percentage of respondents seeing an article who correctly answered the question after the series.

1. If you turn down your heat at night during the winter, do you use more energy to warm the house in the morning than you save during the night? (No) 2 — 70.5%
2. Do draperies help save energy when closed at night? (Yes) 1 — 97.3%
3. A gas range pilot light uses 1%, 10%, 40% or not sure of a range's total gas use (40%) 4 — 16.4%
4. Can respondent pick electric water heater as a higher energy user than an electric toothbrush? 3 — 66.0%
5. What is the cheapest energy in Madison today? (Natural gas from list) 4 — 62.4%
6. How much does it cost to operate a color TV for one hour (2 cents, 50 cents, $1)? (2 cents) 3 — 70.7%
7. How much of Wisconsin's electricity comes from nuclear power plants (less than 1%, 8%, 35%, 75%)? (35%) 4 — 12.6%
8. Do utilities store electricity in batteries for times of high energy demand? (No) 2 — 50.0%
9. What determines how much electric generating capacity is needed in Wisconsin (air conditioning, heating units, or no one knows? (AC) 3 — 53.6%
10. Are electric rates regulated by the state? (Yes) 1 — 81.7%
11. Can a nuclear power plant explode like a small atomic bomb? (No) 2 — 53.6%
12. Are solar water heaters commonly used in other countries? (Yes) 1 — 44.4%

13. Will solar be most useful in 20 years for electricity, heat or transportation? (Heat) 1 — 74.5%
14. Do we import more oil now than before the Arab oil boycott of 1973? (Yes) 1 — 65.5%
15. What percentage of U.S. oil demand will the Alaska pipeline supply (less than 10%, 25%, 50%)? (Less than 10%) 0, but was heavily covered in the general media — 61.7%
16. Can an automobile engine be built which does not give off waste heat? (No) 0, but the concepts were discussed in several articles — 52.9%

Energy Attitudes

Energy attitudes for Madison area newspaper readers were checked both before the series in July, 1976 and after the series in July, 1977.

A majority of respondents—both those who read articles and those who did not—now believe they will be heating their homes at least in part with solar energy in the next 20 years. The number is increasing dramatically. In 1976, about 38 percent of all subscribers said they expected to use solar in 20 years. In 1977, more than 60 percent of series readers and non-series readers said they expected to use solar.

In both 1976 and 1977, readers were asked to rank energy as a national problem against five other problems—the economy, national defense, unemployment, the environment and crime. Those who remembered seeing at least one series article were significantly more likely to name energy as the No. 1 problem in this country than were those who did not remember reading at least one article. Readers of the series increased their No. 1 ranking for energy from 13 percent to 22 percent, while non-readers of the series increased from 11 percent to 15 percent.

Another question asked respondents how serious they thought the energy situation was in the United States today. Those who remembered reading at least one article in the series increased their "very serious" ranking for the energy situation from 34 percent to 41 percent.

However, there was no significant change for the control group which saw the articles, but did not get the questionnaire both years. It would appear that the combination of getting the questionnaire both years and seeing the articles had a cumulative effect.

Those who could not remember reading any of the series decreased from 31 percent selecting energy as "very serious" in 1976 to 30.5 percent in 1977.

Table 2

Sources of Heat Expected to Be Used in the Next 20 Years

	Saw An Article		Did Not See an Article		Sources Presently Used Overall
	1976	1977	1976	1977	
Natural Gas	26.51%	34.89%	31.75%	27.38%	56.97%
Fuel Oil	13.44	16.67	16.01	17.06	30.33
Solar Energy	38.67	60.79	38.10	60.71	0.00
Electricity	27.34	38.67	23.01	33.33	2.46
Coal	6.12	3.17	17.63	15.87	less than 1%

(Note: Respondents could name more than one choice each year. Selections do not sum to 100%.)

Readers also are becoming more optimistic about their ability to live comfortably with less energy. In 1976, when readers were asked how much they could reduce their use of energy without an adverse impact on their standard of living, only about five percent said they could reduce their energy consumption by one-fourth or more without an adverse impact. One year later, that figure had increased to about 15 percent.

Most newspaper readers said they would respond to an energy shortage by asking for voluntary saving, rather than regulation by government or higher prices to reduce demand. Voluntary conservation led other choices by about a two-to-one margin.

Implications for Newspapers

It is clear from this report that this year-long series did not result in dramatic changes in energy knowledge among readers. It also is clear that there are many readers who still lack fundamental energy information.

However, when the small gains represented here for thousands of readers are compared with higher gains from person-to-person meetings or other approaches reaching only a small number of persons, it is evident that newspapers still have promise as an important delivery vehicle for energy information.

One suggestion from the series is that a combination of headlines, photographs or charts, and text is important in conveying energy information. For an item about how much gas a pilot light on a stove uses, the newspaper article included a large picture of a pilot light, a cutline giving the answer, and mention of the answer in the text. Scores for series readers increased by 13 percent, while scores for non-series readers increased by only 2.5 percent. Items which were discussed in the series, but which did not receive this extra emphasis, resulted in lower score increases.

Perceived seriousness of an issue by readers is not a guarantee of readership of articles and learning about that issue. The first survey showed that 85 percent of subscribers felt energy was a "very serious" or "somewhat serious" problem. The high rate of return of questionnaires supports this. However, such concern may not automatically lead to an interest in understanding technical or policy aspects about energy or other issues. Even localization of energy facts does not appear to guarantee readership and learning.

A third conclusion is that newspapers may want to consider setting up more joint ventures with universities to develop articles on technical issues. Such cooperative efforts enable newspapers to tap expertise of university researchers to focus on local problems, while still emphasizing simple easy-to-read language. Articles for this series were approved both by the university and the State Journal before being published. Content was jointly negotiated between university participants and the newspaper staff. ■

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American Newspaper Publishers Association
ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT
FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER No. 26 May 23, 1980
A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

ROUTE TO
Editorial ________
Promotion ________
Circulation ________
Advertising ________
Production ________
Personnel ________
Other ________

The Influence of Local Information On Daily Newspaper Household Penetration In Canada

By Gerald Alperstein

HIGHLIGHTS: Fluctuations in daily newspaper household penetration can be explained by weekly newspaper household penetration (especially paid weeklies), home city dominance (that is, the proportion of households in the daily newspaper's home city), and amount of local information (both news and advertising) published by a daily newspaper for the home city. Differences in daily newspaper household penetration are not attributable to television, radio or monthly magazine media habits.

and

Personal Motivations and Newspaper Readership

By Lee B. Becker, Erik L. Collins and Jeffrey W. Fruit

HIGHLIGHTS: Audience motivations were generally found to be good predictors of newspaper reading habits—in terms of reading frequency, thoroughness of reading and types of items read. Despite substantial differences in many motivations of nonreaders, infrequent readers and frequent readers, all three groups indicated similar desires of seeking entertainment and relaxation from the media.

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The Influence of Local Information on Daily Newspaper Household Penetration in Canada

By Gerald Alperstein

This study was a portion of Gerald Alperstein's Ph.D. dissertation at Syracuse University. Appreciation is expressed to the Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association for use of the data analyzed. Dr. Alperstein is now the associate editor of The Public Sector, *publication of the New York state Civil Service Employees Association.*

One of the major social phenomena of the past few decades is the birth and rapid growth of suburban areas surrounding central cities. Concurrently, many daily newspapers have shown a decline of household penetration in their expanding markets. At the same time, weekly newspaper household penetration has increased.

Most daily newspapers, however, are located in the central city and mostly contain local information pertinent to their home cities, thus ignoring to some degree the local information needs of that portion of their market that lives outside the daily newspaper's home city. Weekly newspapers (including shoppers) are also major suppliers of local information, especially for suburban areas. Dailies and weeklies, therefore, compete with each other by supplying local information.

This analysis looks at the influence of local information on daily newspaper household penetration by comparing the household penetration in 69 Canadian daily newspaper *markets* to the proportion of households in the market which are in the daily newspaper's *home city;* to weekly newspaper household penetration; to the amount of local information contained in the daily newspaper; as well as to use of other media (television, radio and monthly magazines).

Findings in Brief

- Daily newspapers with high household penetrations belong to markets where a high proportion of households are within the home city of the daily newspaper and where weekly newspaper household penetration is low.

- Weekly newspapers are most successful in markets where daily newspapers are least successful, that is, in those markets where a high proportion of households are outside of the home city of the daily newspaper.

- Daily newspapers that publish an above average amount of local information (both news and advertising) for their home city tend to have high household penetrations and belong to markets where a high proportion of households are in the home city of the daily newspaper.

- There appears to be no relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and television viewing, radio listenership and monthly magazine subscriptions. Weekly newspapers, therefore, are the only media which compete with daily newspapers. And, this competition operates on a local information dimension.

Methodology

This report focuses on the newspaper household penetration of daily newspapers in 69 Canadian markets. These 69 markets contain more than 80 percent of all the households in Canada and represent over 90 percent of the daily newspaper circulation in Canada.

The Canadian Daily Newspaper Publishers Association (CDNPA) provided the following information for each of these 69 daily newspaper markets:

Daily Newspaper Household Penetration

Weekly Newspaper Household Penetration

Television Audience Figures

Radio Audience Figures

Monthly Magazine Subscriptions

Among the 69 markets studied, 39 were single daily newspaper markets and 30 were markets that contained more than one daily. This analysis looks at single daily newspaper markets and multiple daily markets separately because household penetration has a different meaning for each type of market.

Daily newspaper household penetration for single markets is calculated as the percentage of households in the market that receive a daily newspaper. Daily newspaper household penetration is somewhat inflated among multiple markets because the calculation does not take into account the number of households that receive more than one daily.

There are also two types of weekly newspaper circulation: "paid," which is an accurate reflection of weekly newspaper readership, and "free," which includes a large number of "never read" weekly newspapers. This report, therefore, separates weeklies into two types of markets: markets where at least 80 percent of the weekly circulation is paid, and markets where less than 60 percent of the weekly circulation is paid.

The last variable used in this analysis is the number of local items published in a daily newspaper. "Local information" was defined as any news or advertising that was about the daily newspaper's home city. This item count was performed for 12 randomly selected daily newspapers for five randomly selected dates in 1971.

Findings

The purpose of this study is to understand the influence of local information on daily newspaper household penetration.

This question was approached in three ways, using two indirect approaches and one direct approach: 1) the relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance (an indirect approach), 2) the relationship between the daily newspaper household penetration and other media household penetration, i.e., weekly newspapers, television, radio and magazines (the second indirect approach), and 3) the relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and the amount of local information published by a daily newspaper (a direct approach).

Home City Dominance. The thought behind finding a relationship between daily newspaper household penetration and local information by looking at home city dominance is somewhat subtle (hence, we call it an indirect approach).

The first analytic approach is based on an assumption that daily newspapers provide ample local information for their home city and relatively little for their outlying suburban communities.

Given this assumption about daily newspapers and their local information content, it would be expected that daily newspaper household penetration would be highest in those markets where a high proportion of the households are in the daily newspaper's home city.

Statistical analysis confirmed this expectation (see Table 1, Line A). The statistical tool used is called the "Pearson product moment correlation." This correlation analysis yields a number that indicates whether there is a relationship between two variables and how strong the relationship is between the two variables. (The two variables in this case are daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance). The number a correlation analysis yields ranges from "-1.00" to "+1.00." A "+1.00" means there is a perfect positive correlation between the two variables, or as one variable increases in value the other variable does exactly the same thing. A "-1.00" means there is a perfect negative or inverse relationship between the two variables, as one variable goes up or down the other variable does just the opposite. The greater the correlation, i.e., the number (either positively or negatively) the stronger the relationship. A correlation that approaches ".00" means there is no relationship.

In Table 1 A there are moderately high positive correlations between daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance for daily newspapers in single markets (+.63 in 1961 and +.64 in 1971). The correlations for dailies in multiple markets are not as strong, but they also are positive (+.35 in 1961 and +.22 in 1971). The lower correlations for the multiple markets most likely are due to the way daily newspaper household penetration is calculated. Daily newspaper household penetration for dailies in multiple markets is probably inflated because of some overlap among those households taking more than one daily.

The reasoning behind this indirect approach was that if daily newspapers mostly provide local information pertinent to their home city; and if local information influences daily newspaper household penetration, then daily newspaper household penetration would be lower in those markets where a large portion of the households are outside the daily newspaper's home city. This was indeed the case! Conversely, daily newspaper household penetration is much higher for those daily newspapers that belong to markets where a high proportion of the households are within the daily newspaper's home city.

Other Media. The thought behind finding relationships between daily newspaper household penetration and local information by looking at other media use in this second analysis is also an indirect approach which warrants an introduction of its own.

This second analysis is based on the assumption that television, radio and monthly magazines are not major suppliers of local information. Weekly newspapers, on the other hand, exist primarily for the purpose of supplying local news and advertising. It was therefore anticipated that daily newspaper household penetration would have little relation to television, radio and magazine usage, but would have a strong negative relationship to weekly newspaper household penetration.

These expectations were confirmed statistically (see Table 1, Line B). There is little correlation between daily newspaper household penetration and television viewing, radio listenership, or monthly magazine subscriptions.

For weekly newspapers, however, there is a strong correlation with daily newspaper household penetration.

In other words, weekly newspapers are the main "other" media competitors of daily newspapers. And, since weekly newspapers exist primarily to supply local information, this competition between dailies and weeklies operates to a considerable degree on a local information dimension.

When weekly newspaper household penetration is evaluated in terms of the home city dominance variable, weekly newspapers are most successful in those markets where a good proportion of the households reside outside of the daily newspaper's home city (see Table 1, Line C). This relationship is most significant when evaluating weekly newspapers that have at least 80 percent of their circulation paid.

Table 1

	Single Daily Newspaper Markets		Multiple Daily Newspaper Markets		All Daily Newspaper Markets	
	1961	1971	1961	1971	1961	1971
A. Daily Newspaper Household Penetration and Home City Dominance*	+ .63	+ .64	+ .35	+ .22	+ .41	+ .37
B. Daily Newspaper Household Penetration and						
1)Hours of Household Television Watching	**	+ .03	**	-.35	**	-.17
2) Hours of Household Radio Listening	**	+ .03	**	+ .07	**	+ .10
3) Monthly Magazine Household Penetration	**	-.27	**	-.04	**	-.20
4) Weekly Newspaper Household Penetration	**	-.43	**	-.13	**	-.23
a. at least 80% of circulation paid	**	-.70	**	-.39	**	-.53
b. less than 60% of circulation paid	**	-.55	**	-.67	**	-.58
C. Weekly Newspaper Household Penetration and Home City Dominance*	**	-.47	**	-.16	**	-.35
1) at least 80% of circulation paid	**	-.78	**	-.82	**	-.78
2) less than 60% of circulation paid	**	-.56	**	-.06	**	-.37

*"Home City Dominance" is the proportion of households in the market residing in the home city of the daily newspaper.

**Data is either unavailable or unreliable.

In other words, the most successful weeklies are those that supply local information to areas that the daily newspaper does not, i.e., the suburban areas outside of the daily newspaper's home city.

Amount of Local Information. In the previous analyses daily newspaper markets have been compared with each other in order to determine which types of market environments characterize a successful daily newspaper, that is, a daily newspaper with high household penetration.

In this third analysis, we are comparing different *newspapers.* This third analysis examines the importance of local information on daily newspaper household penetration by actually looking at the local content in a random sample of daily newspapers, some with high and some with low daily newspaper household penetration. Twelve dailies were randomly selected from the list of 39 dailies in single newspaper markets. (Single daily newspaper markets were chosen because it was suspected that inclusion of multiple markets would cloud the analysis since the household penetration figure for multiple markets is inflated.)

Of the 12 dailies selected, six had above average (i.e., "median") household penetration in their markets and six had below average household penetration. And, five out of the six with above average household penetration printed an above average amount of local news and local display advertising. Further, five out of the six dailies with low household penetration printed a below average amount of local news and display advertising.

In other words, 10 out of the 12 single market daily newspapers were either above or below the median on both daily newspaper household penetration and amount of local information printed (both news and advertising). The same patterns emerge when local news items and local display advertising are calculated separately.

Not surprisingly, the same patterns also emerge when daily newspaper household penetration is replaced with the home city dominance variable. (Remember the high positive correlation between daily newspaper household penetration and home city dominance?)

Clearly, local information emerges as key when explaining differences in household penetration of Canadian daily newspapers, especially single market dailies.

Summary

This analysis has attempted to show the importance of local information to daily newspaper household penetration and how local information thus relates to circulation.

This analysis has shown that the real market of daily newspapers appears to be the home city of the daily newspaper, that is, the area where the daily newspaper generally provides a lot of local information. Daily newspaper household penetration is healthy in markets where most households are concentrated in the core city, or the daily newspaper's home city. Daily newspaper household penetration is low in markets with sprawling suburban communities.

Perhaps daily newspapers should be content to realize their market limitations. If daily newspapers, on the other hand, wish to expand their markets to the outlying suburban communities, this analysis strongly suggests that such a strategy for market growth should consider local information key in such an expansion. Successful weeklies are doing just that: providing local information to suburban communities. Weekly newspapers are thus the daily newspapers' main competitors in suburban markets. And, the main strength of weekly newspapers lies in their ability to provide local information (both news and advertising) to these suburbanites.

There is no doubt that this analysis is a true picture of the daily newspaper market situation in Canada for 1971. It is not very clear, however, if the patterns presented here are representative of 1980. It is also not as clear how appropriate this analysis is for daily newspapers in the United States . Canadian daily newspapers and United States daily newspapers do have many things in common. It is, however, recommended that a similar analysis be performed for United States daily newspapers and also that this analysis be updated for Canadian daily newspapers.

Be that as it may, the findings presented here suggest that daily newspapers in Canada as well as in the United States would do well to be aware of the size and growth patterns of their home city and suburban markets, the potential competitive edge of weekly newspapers (especially paid weeklies), and the amount of local information they are providing for their various geographic markets. ■

Personal Motivations and Newspaper Readership

By Lee B. Becker, Erik L. Collins
and Jeffrey W. Fruit

Lee B. Becker is an associate professor in the School of Journalism at Ohio State University where Erik L. Collins is an assistant professor. Jeffrey W. Fruit is an instructor in the Department of Journalism at Ohio Wesleyan University.

One of the simpler explanations offered in recent years for newspaper circulation trends concerns audience motivations. Motivation to read is thought to be the major difference between readers and nonreaders.

However, it has been difficult to provide strong empirical evidence to support this position for several reasons. Audience members are not used to being asked about the reasons underlying their reading habits. It is even more difficult to learn about the habits of nonreaders, who must be asked about motivations they lack. In addition, this group of nonreaders is often relatively small, making it difficult to isolate them for detailed analysis.

This study funded by the ANPA News Research Center attempted to overcome these difficulties by measuring motivations in a general way, not specifically linking them to newspaper reading habits. Nonreaders also were oversampled to increase the size of the group under study. In this way, it was possible to compare readers and nonreaders in terms of their needs and motivations.

Findings in Brief

- In general, motivations were found to be rather good predictors of newspaper reading.

- Nonreaders and newspaper skimmers were found to be less motivated to keep up with what is going on in their communities and around the nation than readers.

- Nonreaders were no different from readers in terms of seeking entertainment and relaxation in their daily lives.

- Nonreaders were more highly motivated to seek entertainment than to keep informed on public affairs, while readers were about equally motivated to seek entertainment and to keep informed on public affairs.

Study Design

These findings are based on interviews with 596 household heads in Columbus, Ohio and surrounding Franklin County. The interviews were conducted over the telephone by trained personnel. Survey respondents were chosen to represent persons over 18 years of age living in Columbus and surrounding communities. Fieldwork was done in April, 1978.

Persons who do not read a newspaper at least once a week were oversampled in the study. Where approximately 9 percent of household heads in the sample area report not reading a newspaper, 24 percent of the actual sample members were classified as nonreaders.

Motivations were measured by asking respondents to indicate how important each of a series of 13 needs was to them.

These needs were presented in general terms not linked to media use. For example, respondents were asked: *"How important is it to you to keep up with the latest events here in Columbus and Franklin County?"*

In addition to these questions on motivations, respondents were asked a series of questions about their readership of newspapers.

Reading Frequency and Motivations

The general conclusion that motivations are good predictors of newspaper reading is based on an examination of the data in Table 1. All the entries in that table are the mean scores for the various motivations listed at the left. Scores range from 1 (not at all important) to 3 (very important).

The first three columns of scores on the lefthand side of Table 1, entitled "reading frequency," deal with motivation as a predictor of the frequency of newspaper reading, classifying sample members according to the number of days they read.

Nonreaders (those who read zero days) and both classes of readers indicated their strongest motivations are to have an opportunity to relax and to see things they consider entertaining.

Nonreaders indicated little motivation to keep up with merchandise or sales in local stores, to have current events information for use in conversation, and to hear arguments supporting their own position on issues.

Nonreaders did indicate some motivation to keep up with local events and government but their prime motivation was relaxation and entertainment.

Frequent readers (those who read 6-7 days), in contrast, reported high motivation for a number of reasons other than for entertainment and relaxation: to have current events information for conversation, to keep up with local events, to know about local government, and to keep up with national events.

Table 1

Strength of Personal Motivations Under Various Readership Conditions

Readership of Various Subjects

	Reading Frequency Read Per Week[1]			Read Stories About Local Government[1]			Read Stories About National Government			Read stories about Accidents/Crime[1]			Read Stories About Ordinary People		
	0 (Non-Readers)	1-5 (Infrequent Readers)	6-7 (Frequent Readers)	Rarely	Some Time	Most Time	Rarely	Some Time	Most Time	Rarely	Some Time	Most Time	Rarely	Some Time	Most Time
Know about local merchandise/sales	1.87	2.04	2.10*	1.80	2.06	2.21*	1.98	2.21	2.08	1.81	2.06	2.19*	1.79	2.03	2.17*
Have opportunities to relax	2.52	2.66	2.57	2.43	2.65	2.61*	2.39	2.61	2.66*	2.62	2.64	2.56	2.48	2.60	2.62
See and hear entertaining things	2.47	2.49	2.47	2.48	2.46	2.48	2.32	2.52	2.47	2.32	2.49	2.53*	2.42	2.43	2.50
Have current events information for conversation	2.00	2.29	2.50*	2.06	2.36	2.66*	2.02	2.34	2.69*	2.35	2.42	2.49	2.26	2.38	2.50*
See and hear arguments supporting your position	1.89	2.08	2.11*	1.76	2.06	2.25*	1.77	2.10	2.20*	1.94	2.07	2.18*	1.74	2.07	2.16*
Keep up with local events	2.17	2.29	2.49*	1.88	2.34	2.69*	2.00	2.39	2.60*	2.13	2.40	2.54*	1.88	2.42	2.49*
Keep up with national events	2.08	2.19	2.46*	1.94	2.33	2.57*	1.71	2.28	2.70*	2.39	2.41	2.33	1.97	2.44	2.39*
Know about local government	2.15	2.27	2.49*	1.67	2.33	2.79*	1.89	2.36	2.68*	2.29	2.36	2.52*	1.91	2.42	2.49*
Know about national government	2.13	2.23	2.40*	1.97	2.47	2.66*	1.85	2.40	2.76*	2.49	2.51	2.43	2.12	2.50	2.40*
Have opinions on local issues	2.13	2.23	2.40*	1.79	2.28	2.64*	1.97	2.30	2.55*	2.14	2.32	2.47*	1.79	2.37	2.43*
Have opinions on national issues	2.01	2.18	2.40*	1.92	2.30	2.50*	1.81	2.24	2.61*	2.34	2.31	2.34	1.94	2.39	2.35*
Avoid seeing and hearing local issues and problems	1.49	1.43	1.39	1.51	1.42	1.31*	1.53	1.41	1.31*	1.42	1.37	1.39	1.44	1.47	1.33*
Avoid seeing and hearing national issues and problems	1.47	1.45	1.38	1.43	1.47	1.30*	1.50	1.45	1.30*	1.42	1.38	1.41	1.41	1.49	1.35*
N =	144	158	294	66	193	182	62	199	180	78	163	200	35	149	257

[1] Mean Values. A high score indicates the motivation was considered important, a low score indicates the reverse. The theoretical range in scores is from 1 (not at all important) to 3 (very important).

*These means are significantly different from each other at the .05 level, based on a one-way analysis of variance.

Occupying the ground between these extremes, infrequent readers (those who read 1-5 days) indicateed greater motivation than either nonreaders or frequent readers for relaxation and entertainment. Their mean scores for the other motivations range between those of the other readership classes.

Thoroughness of Reading and Motivations

Those respondents who reported reading a newspaper were also asked to indicate how much of the newspaper they generally read.

For this analysis of the relationship between motivations and the amount of reading, readers were divided into those who typically read only one or two pages (skimmers), read some pages (less thorough readers), and read every page (thorough readers). Those persons who read the newspaper thoroughly (every page) are more highly motivated to be informed about local events, including commercial ones, than those persons who reported reading only one or two pages in the newspaper. The thorough readers also are those who want to know about current events so they can use that information in their conversations. They also are more likely than the less-thorough readers to be motivated by a need or desire to have opinions on issues, both local and national.

Again, those who read only a few pages of the newspaper and those who read nearly every page are about equal in terms of desiring relaxing and entertaining materials in their lives. But the skimmers or scanners of the newspaper are more highly motivated by this need than by the need to be informed on community affairs.

The less thorough readers also are more likely than the thorough readers to indicate a need to avoid seeing and hearing about local issues and problems as well as national ones.

Readership of News Content and Motivation

The remaining columns of Table 1, entitled "Readership of Various Subjects," details the results of questions asked readers about four types of stories which appear in a daily newspaper. In general, motivations are better readership predictors for stories about local and national government than stories about "ordinary people" or accidents and crime.

Persons reporting rarely reading local and national stories are less likely to be motivated by a need to know about public affairs than persons reading these stories most of the time. And, conversely, those who rarely read such stories also indicated being motivated by a need to *avoid* hearing and seeing local and national issues to a greater extent than persons who read these stories most of the time.

Motivations do not appear to be consistent predictors of stories about "ordinary people" or stories about accidents or crime.

(The motivational measures used in Table 1 did not make specific reference to the mass media; respondents were simply asked to indicate how important a series of needs were to them.)

Findings in Relation to Previous Research

In line with previous research in ANPA News Research Reports 14, 17, 18 and 21, it should be no surprise to learn that the nonreaders, who, as a group, are lower in their motivation to keep informed, also are more likely than the frequent readers to have lived in Franklin County for 10 years or less and are more likely to be renters than home owners. The nonreaders also are most likely to be unmarried and under 30 years of age. They are more likely to be low in formal education and to be black. They are less likely to watch local and national television news, listen to radio news, or read a news magazine. Most readership research has produced a similar picture of the chronic nonreaders. These persons—the young, the mobile, the unattached, the low educated and the black—seem to be nonusers of the media because they lack the motivation needed to be informed.

Two recent ANPA studies reached somewhat similar conclusions regarding the motivations of nonreaders and infrequent readers. Poindexter (Report No. 9) found that among the most common reasons given by nonreaders for the rejection of newspapers was lack of time and lack of interest. McLeod and Choe (Report No. 10) found that infrequent newspaper readers were less likely than frequent readers to be motivated by a desire to keep up with the latest events and to have something to talk about with others. The conversational utility measure, a strong predictor in the Columbus study as well, lends support to the contention that the nonreaders and infrequent readers are unattached to the community—or at least that part of it which places value on current affairs information.

Implications and Recommendations

Two separate strategies for turning nonreaders into readers suggest themselves. The first is the traditional one. The newspaper product can be changed to some degree to offer these nonreaders more of the entertainment they currently read. But the inherent problem with this solution is obvious. Readers are using their newspapers to satisfy their need to keep informed about the local community and the country at large. The product should not be changed so as to make these members of the reading audience feel they are not getting the news they want.

The second strategy involves altering readers' needs rather than that of the newspapers. The data suggest that newspapers might consider more extensive promotion of the value of being informed about community and national happenings. Newspapers might strive to increase the motivation to keep abreast of the news.

One long range way to attempt to increase this motivation is to work more closely with the local school systems and expand newspaper involvement in the classroom. Teachers could be useful outlets for information about the local newspapers and about the need to know about community affairs.

Newspapers also could modify their advertising strategies to focus on the importance of an informed citizenry and the advantages of community involvement. At present, most advertising campaigns seem to focus on the newspaper product, rather than the need it can satisfy. A campaign designed to remind audience members of the importance of keeping informed might well be more valuable for coping with circulation difficulties in the long run. ■

These are research summaries which periodically will appear in ANPA News Research Reports. These briefs summarize studies appearing in research journals and other periodicals not on the regular reading list of newspaper people.

Managing Editors do More Managing than Editing

Managing editors spend only about a third of their job time on activities directly related to the production of a given day's newspaper. In an article entitled, "Managing Editors and Their Newsrooms: A Survey of 208 APME Members," published in the Winter 1978 issue of *Journalism Quarterly*, Professor Edward J. Trayes of Temple University reports that although most managing editors are promoted into their positions from editorial jobs, they spend most of their time performing non-editorial functions such as handling personnel problems, conducting staff meetings, dealing with the public as a spokesperson for the newspaper, administering and developing budgets and conferring with other newspaper departments.

Almost all of the 208 managing editors surveyed reported that they had received no in-service training to prepare them for these duties. Moreover, the majority were never given clear-cut descriptions of their responsibilities and areas of authority when they assumed their positions. Although 31 percent report directly to the publisher, 57 percent report to an executive editor, editor or general manager positioned between themselves and the publisher, a situation which sometimes causes even more confusion about editorial decision-making, and may draw even more of the managing editor's time away from the actual business of producing the paper.

Pointing out that overseeing newsgathering and production is a full-time job, Trayes laments that it is "unfortunate for someone with superior newsroom ability to be pulled away from what he knows and does best." ■

Community Structure Determines Media Availability, Preferences

Community structure determines what kinds of media are avaialable to the population. In turn, media choices determine the uses and preferences that individuals have for different media.

For example, individuals in smaller rural communities with weekly local newspapers rely more heavily on television news and prefer it to reading the newspaper; those in larger communities with daily newspapers look more to those newspapers for their news and watch less news on television.

These findings are from a survey conducted in 19 urban, suburban and rural Minnesota communities, and reported in "Community Structure and Media Use" in the Autumn 1978 issue of *Journalism Quarterly*. Researchers C. N. Olien, G. A. Donohue and P. J. Tichenor of the University of Minnesota also found that the amount of exposure to printed news varied enormously across areas. For example, a typical citizen in a community of 40,000 with at least one daily newspaper, is exposed to 133 percent as much news as a typical citizen in a rural community of 5,770 with one weekly local newspaper.

The researchers note that the pattern of low newspaper use and higher preference for television prevailed in three suburban areas with weekly newspapers, despite their easy access to daily metropolitan newspapers. Perhaps, the researches speculated, "a high level of choice may not produce a high community-wide orientation toward newspapers, but may instead lead to high media *specialization* in a suburb."

Moreover, they conclude, it is possible that the less diversity a community enjoys both in its own structure and in the media available to it, the more likely it is to be aroused when community newspapers concentrate on a crisis situation. This could have "far-reaching consequences for information control and therefore social control if it is borne out by further evidence. ■

American Newspaper Publishers Association

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American Newspaper Publishers Association

ANPA NEWS RESEARCH REPORT

FROM THE ANPA NEWS RESEARCH CENTER No. 28 September 15, 1980

A REPORT FOR EDITORS PROVIDED IN COORDINATION WITH THE NEWSPAPER READERSHIP COUNCIL

ROUTE TO
Editorial ________
Promotion ________
Circulation ________
Advertising ________
Production ________
Personnel ________
Other ________

Reader Interest in Business, Sports and Foreign News

HIGHLIGHTS: Each of the three studies in this report explores in some detail a category of news which traditionally has been regarded as monolithic. One of the characteristics of continuing research in any area is that global categories, such as business, sports and foreign news, begin to receive more sensitive, detailed treatment.

- The public is more interested in stories about local business and industry than in national business news or stock market reports, according to a North Carolina survey. The young are most interested in reading about new products, how business and industry affect the environment, and how business in general operates. Coverage of business by both newspapers and television is considered to be slightly favorably biased toward business and industry, but public statements of major corporations are considered generally trustworthy.

- In sports, it is males, the middle-aged, elderly, and persons with higher education and income who express the most interest in sports news generally. But a breakdown of sports news shows, for example, that females are more interested than males in local sports.

- People say there is too much violent subject matter in the news about foreign countries. Yet when confronted with a set of specially prepared foreign news stories, respondents rated the article with violent subject matter as the most interesting. However, when evaluating such non-violent subjects as politics and business/economics, respondents considered those stories which related foreign news events to home and country more interesting than stories which emphasized conflict.

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Reader Interest In Business News

By Jane E. Brown and Carol Reuss

This report is based on data gathered in early 1979 by the North Carolina Poll for the General Motors Corporation 1979 Business Understanding Competition. The University of North Carolina School of Journalism earned first place in the competition with a Study of Roles/Responsibilities of Business and the News Media. Professors Brown and Reuss were faculty coordinators for the project.

A 1978 survey[1] found that the news media underestimate reader interest in business and financial news. Reporters, editors and news directors estimated that only four percent of their audiences were especially interested in business and financial news, but 26 percent of the public actually expressed a great deal of interest in it.

Accepting the fact that many readers are interested in news of this type, newspapers can serve readers better—and increase the number of readers in some demographic categories—by carefully matching news coverage with reader interests.

Findings in Brief

- The public is most interested in stories about local business and industry.

- The young are most interested in reading about how business and industry affect the environment, the development of new products and how business in general works.

- Interest in national business news is lower than interest in news about local business and industry. Older readers and those with only high school educations are least interested in national business news. Professionals and men are most interested in national business news.

- Very little interest is expressed for stock market reports in the newspaper. Men are more interested than women, but interest is still very low.

- Coverage of business news by both television and newspapers is considered slightly biased in favor of business and industry. Public statements by major corporations are considered generally trustworthy.

Methodology

As part of the Carolina Poll, a statewide public opinion survey of residents of North Carolina conducted each semester by the School of Journalism at the University of North Carolina, a random sample of 513 adults (age 18 and older) were asked a series of questions concerning their interest in reading different kinds of news about business and industry. Respondents were interviewed by phone during March 1979. The sampling error of a sample of this size is plus or minus four percent.

Respondents were asked to use an 11-point scale on which a score of zero "means you definitely would *not* want to read," and a score of 10 "means you definitely would want to read," to rate six categories of news about business and industry. These categories were derived from preliminary content analyses of state newspapers.

Respondents were also asked to rate news coverage of business and industry on an 11-point scale on which "the 10 means the press and television are very favorable to business and industry . . . and the zero means they are very unfavorable to them." This question grew out of a concern expressed by business spokesmen that they have been getting "bad press."

Similarly, respondents were asked to rate the public statements of major corporations on an 11-point "trustworthiness" scale. Public confidence in major corporations has shown a rather steady decline in recent years, according to national public opinion polls.[2] Does the public generalize this lack of confidence to include public statements of major corporations since these statements are often included in news stories about business and industry?

Results

The average interest in reading various kinds of news about business and industry is, in general, high. As shown in Table 1, all but one of the news categories

Table 1

Interest in Categories of Business News

"If a score of ten means you definitely would want to read . . . and a score of zero means you definitely would *not* want to read, tell me what score you would give to each of these kinds of news."

News Category	Average Score
Stories about local business and industry	7.15
Stories about business and industry's effect on the environment	6.91
Stories about new products	6.61
Stories about how business in general works	6.05
Stories about national business and industry	5.48
Stock market reports	2.98

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[1] Harris, Louis (January 1978), "Media Underestimates News Interest." Chicago Tribune, Jan. 9, Sec. 4, p. 4.

[2] Harris, Louis (March 14, 1977), The Harris Survey: Confidence Climbing ISSN 0046-6875. University of North Carolina: Louis Harris Data Center, Institute for Research in Social Science.

were rated toward the "definitely would read" side of the 11-point scale. Only the stock market category received a decidedly negative interest rating. Stories about national business and industry are next lowest on the interest ranking, but still manage to achieve a better than neutral rating.

When these ratings are examined for various demographic groups, interesting differences in levels of interest emerge (Table 2). Newspaper editors have been concerned recently with the decrease in readership among the younger segments of the population. Apparently the young are even less interested in traditional business page content—national business news and stock market reports—than their older counterparts. Those who are less than 30 years old report the greatest interest in reading stories about business and industry's effect on the environment, about new products and about local, rather than national, business and industry.

Interest in local business news does not differ significantly by educational level, although professionals show a slightly higher interest than either the unemployed or non-professionally employed. Women reported a slightly higher interest in local news than the men interviewed. In general, however, interest in local business news is high across all demographic groups.

Stories about the environmental impact of business and industry are most interesting to the better educated and the young. Women again report a slightly higher interest in these kinds of stories than men.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, women do not show a greater interest than men in stories about new products. Again, the young, the better educated and the professionally employed express the most interest in this kind of story.

The young also are interested in stories about how business in general works (for example stories explaining calculation of profit figures or the process of labor negotiations).

Stories about national business and industry and stock market reports fare least well in the interest ratings across all segments of the public. Professionals are most interested in both of these categories and men are more interested than women but, in general, the public appears to find little appeal in these traditional business news categories.

Analysis of the perceived bias of business news and the trustworthiness of statements of major corporations revealed that the business community may be overly concerned about media performance and how that affects the public's perceptions of business. In general, the public rated news reports as slightly favorable to business and industry (average score of 6.66 on the 11-point scale). They also find public statements by major corporations generally trustworthy (average score of 6.20 on the 11-point scale).

Implications for Newspapers

Newspapers seeking ways to increase readership and improve coverage of business and industry news

Table 2

Interest in Categories of Business News Among Various Demographic Groups

	Age			Education			Occupation			Sex	
News Category	Younger than 30	30-59	Older than 60	Grade School	High School	College	Unemployed**	Non-Professional	Professional	Male	Female
Local business and industry	7.15	7.31	6.86	7.10	7.19	7.17	7.03	7.15	7.42	7.08	7.21
Business and industry's effect on the environment	7.49	6.85	6.34*	6.44	6.73	7.34*	7.00	6.74	7.25	6.82	6.99
New products	7.43	6.49	5.98*	6.37	6.60	6.80	6.60	6.51	6.92	6.64	6.58
How business in general works	6.62	5.96	5.57*	6.41	5.83	6.28*	5.96	6.07	6.11	6.17	5.94
National business and industry	5.60	5.68	4.94	6.00	5.13	5.88	5.16	5.38	6.49	5.76	5.23*
Stock market reports	2.66	3.15	3.01	4.17	2.54	3.20*	2.57	3.18	3.32	3.64	2.42*
Sample size:	(134)	(268)	(98)	(59)	(264)	(179)	(159)	(84)	(239)	(234)	(272)

*The comparisons between the categories of the demographic variable are statistically significant differences at $p \leq .05$. For example, we could expect the differences between the ratings for interesting stories about new products by age categories to have occurred less than five times out of one hundred by chance alone.

**The "unemployed" category includes retired people and students, thus overrepresenting this segment as it is usually defined as only those seeking work.

should consider the following suggestions, based on this study:

- Extend coverage of business and industry news because readers are interested in it.

- Devote staff and space to articles about new products. This study indicates that younger readers, better educated readers and professionals are more interested in articles about new products than older, less educated, non-professionals—but editorial choices in the kinds of products described in newspaper articles might draw the latter to the business pages. Newspapers might "target" new product coverage to serve selected, desired readers.

- Publish more articles about how business and industry operate—how they work. Younger readers show a significant interest in this topic.

- Limit the space devoted to national business and industry stories unless they relate to topics—environment, how business works, etc.—of importance to local readers.

- Evaluate local readership of the stock market reports.

This study indicates low reader interest in the stock market reports so it might be appropriate to devote the space to other aspects of business and industry news. If local readership studies indicate that a significant, desired portion of a newspaper's audience is interested in the market reports, they should be published regularly. If readers are interested only in selected stocks, abbreviated market reports could make space for other business news.

The findings show that the public perceives news reports as slightly favorable to business and industry and that statements by major corporations are probably most useful to newspaper reporters. These findings, shared with news sources from business and industry, may help calm the fears of business representatives. ■

Reader Interest in Sports News

By J. P. Winter

This study was partially funded by the Watertown (N.Y.) Daily Times. Winter, a former weekly newspaper editor, is a Canada Council Fellow completing his PhD at Syracuse University.

Many studies have examined readership of sports sections in newspapers. As might be expected, males have consistently been found to be more regular readers than females. Taking the overall average figures from a number of these studies, about two-thirds of male respondents identified themselves as regular readers, compared to about one-third of female respondents.*

Aside from the sex breakdown, however, few studies have looked at other demographics, or more importantly, have attempted to break sports content down into specific categories, such as local versus national news.

This concern with the details of sports content was addressed in a study conducted predominantly in the small towns of St. Lawrence County, New York, in July 1978. About 1,200, 20-minute, in-home interviews were conducted with a random sample of residents.

By going beyond the usual measurement of sports as a single category and looking at differences in the audience for local and national sports news, this study identified an important female segment in the sports audience.

Findings

Respondents with higher education and income, males, and middle-aged and older respondents generally expressed greater interest in sports news. As can be seen in Table 1, 61 percent of respondents with less than a high school education "never or seldom" read a newspaper sports section, compared to only 44 percent of respondents with more than a high school education. Some 62 percent of respondents earning under $10,000 yearly "never or seldom" read, compared to only 41 percent of those earning $25,000 or more.

Twenty-nine percent of those 41 to 60 years old read sports sections daily, compared to 15 percent of those under 40. Finally, 36 percent of male respondents read sports sections daily, compared to 13 percent of females, a finding that is in keeping with other research to date.

These findings are similar to those found for newspaper content generally, where higher socio-economic status respondents, older people and males are the most likely to read. (ANPA News Research Report No. 7)

While this tells us *who* is reading the sports section, it tells us nothing about *what* they are reading. What kind of sports news is being read and by whom?

Although female respondents were less interested in sports news generally, Table 2 indicates that they showed more interest than did males in *local* sports only, compared to national sports only or both local and national sports. Forty percent of females preferred local sports, compared to 18 percent of males. Males were more likely to prefer national or both local and national sports.

Survey respondents also were asked whether they were interested in the fine details of sports news, the box scores and the agate material. Fully 85 percent of males responded that they were somewhat or very interested (among those reading the sports section) and, as Table 3 shows, females were not far behind, with 74 percent responding in this manner.

Table 1

Frequency Read Sports Section by Demographics

	Education			Household Annual Income			Age			Sex	
Read Sports Section	Less than High School	High School	At Least Some College	Less Than $10,000	$10,000-$24,999	$25,000 or more	18-40 years	41-60 years	61 years or older	Male	Female
Never or seldom	61%	54%	44%	62%	44%	41%	50%	48%	58%	36%	63%
Once or twice weekly	11%	13%	19%	13%	18%	14%	22%	14%	9%	13%	17%
Nearly everyday	7%	9%	12%	7%	12%	13%	14%	9%	7%	14%	7%
Daily	21%	24%	25%	18%	26%	33%	15%	29%	26%	36%	13%
TOTAL	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	101%	101%	100%	100%	99%	100%
N	281	310	529	381	499	111	342	422	320	499	617

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*For details see references listed at the end of this report.

Table 2

Type of Sports Read By Men and Women

	Men	Women
Local	18%	40%
National	22%	14%
Both	60%	46%
TOTAL	100%	100%
N	327	236

Table 3

Interest in Sports Details by Men and Women

	Men	Women
Not at all	15%	26%
Somewhat	43%	54%
Very	42%	20%
TOTAL	100%	100%
N	330	240

Implications

Besides the male/female differences usually reported, there are other distinct demographic characteristics of sports readers who generally tend to be middle-aged or older, male, and in the higher income and education brackets. While males are more interested in national sports news and the fine details of sports news, females tend to be only interested in local sports news.

Why would this be so? Although the present study provides no data on this, one reason could be that mothers are heavily involved in local sports through their children. Especially in a county such as St. Lawrence, mothers may spend a lot of time accompanying children to minor league ball games and other events.

Researchers may want to directly address this question in future studies, and may also want to compare rural settings such as this one to urban settings. In the meantime, editors should note and use the fact that women are among their audience, especially for local sports news. ■

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Reader Interest in Foreign News

By Vernone Sparkes and J. P. Winter

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Most readership studies have not paid any detailed attention to foreign news. Those which have measured reader interest in foreign news typically have done so with little or no further refinement of the category.

In contrast, a good deal of descriptive research on newspaper content has been devoted to specifying what types of foreign news stories are most likely to fill the news hole. This "gatekeeper" research on the stories that are printed attempts to identify which story ingredients or foreign events editors are most likely to consider newsworthy enough to publish.

Unfortunately, very little research has related public interest in types of news (foreign and otherwise) to those news values of the press. There is at least some evidence from other news areas that the professional priorities identified by gatekeeper research do not hold true for the public.

For instance, editors tend to consider stories dealing with conflict (e.g., violence, crime, confrontation, catastrophe) of the highest news value, whereas the public has its highest interest in more relevant news stories which have an immediate bearing on home and country.[1] No research of this type, however, has been done specifically on foreign news.

Findings in Brief

People say there is too much violent subject matter in the news about foreign countries. Yet, when people were asked to rate a variety of carefully constructed fictitious news stories, the news story with violent subject matter was considered more interesting than any of the other subjects.

If violence is indeed what the public chooses as most interesting, one also might reasonably expect a writing orientation emphasizing conflict to be of the utmost interest to the public, regardless of subject matter. This however, was *not* the case.

The fictitious news stories evaluated by the respondents in this study were constructed to measure interest in story orientation, or "slant," as well as topic. These foreign news stories which were written with a U.S. or home country angle, i.e., identifying foreign affairs with the United States, were considered more interesting by the respondents than stories that emphasized conflict.

In other words, trying to impose a conflict orientation on an otherwise non-violent story does not necessarily assure higher public interest in the news item. Oversimplified, this implies that when the public is given a choice on method of presentation for a story which is *not* inherently violent, the public prefers harmony (i.e., relevance to home and country) in foreign reporting as opposed to dissonance (i.e., conflict).

Methodology

During the summer of 1978 two hundred and one randomly selected adult heads of households in Syracuse, New York, were interviewed in person and asked about their interest in foreign news content.

The key part of the interview asked respondents to indicate how interested they were in a variety of stories by rating each story on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 representing maximum interest, and 1 representing total non-interest. The stories themselves were fictitious foreign news accounts, written and prepared to look like actual stories which had been clipped from a newspaper.

These stories were carefully prepared to measure reader interest from three perspectives: story orientation, subject of the story and the country which the story was about.

Each story contained one of four orientations or "slants." Three represented news values which gatekeeper research has singled out as the qualities of an event which will most certainly assure attention by the news media:

- Conflict: Included here are the areas of violence, crime, confrontation, catastrophe, etc. Such generally unpleasant events will be more often reported than peaceful developments.
- Impact/Affinity: Included here are items which are thought to have relevance for the audience, or events which are socially or culturally familiar. Such relevant and familiar events are more likely to receive attention than either matters which have no immediate bearing on socially and culturally unfamiliar events.
- Personification: This includes events with strong personal dimensions, which overall receive more attention than broader social or natural events.

Additionally, stories were prepared which represented a "straight" news orientation to serve as a basis for comparing the above three orientations.

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[1] L. Ewin Atwood, "How Newsmen and Readers Perceive Each Other: Story Preference," *Journalism Quarterly*, 47:2 (1970), p. 298.

As for subject matter in the fictitious stories, the same basic political and economic subject matter was re-written respectively to emphasize each of the four types of orientations. Another four subjects were written with only the "straight" news orientation.

Figure 1 details the news value orientation, subject and resulting headlines of the fictitious foreign news stories evaluated by respondents.

Each of these 12 stories were modified for four countries. The countries were chosen to satisfy two criteria.

First, none of those selected were featured in any major news events in the month preceding the field work period which might bias the measures.

Secondly, these four countries were chosen specifically to measure reader interest in terms of the country's eliteness/status and the country's affinity/familiarity. Hence, Great Britain was chosen because it represents a familiar elite country. Japan is elite, but is not culturally familiar. Canada is familiar, but not elite. And, Nigeria was chosen as both non-familiar and non-elite.

This total of 48 stories was judged too repetitious and time-consuming for each subject to evaluate. Therefore, the stories were divided into four sets, such that each respondent would judge only one of the four news value orientations for each country-subject combination of the political and economic stories, and only one country variation of each of the remaining subject stories.

Results

This study was designed to provide two types of information. One set of questions collected self-reports (what respondents say they are interested in) while a second set of questions more directly assessed actual behavior (what respondents actually select as most interesting).

When simply asked about types of foreign news, people reported that they found too many stories on violence in the news and too few on culture and social customs (Table 1). There also was an expressed interest for more news of "ordinary people" and of social problems in other countries. Expressed interest in both cultural news and social problems in other countries correlated highly with education.

When we come to the interest rankings of the fictitious stories, i.e., what people select as most interesting, a somewhat different pattern emerges.

An average interest score was computed across all stories containing a particular orientation, subject or country. For example, eight stories featured the conflict orientation, but each with a different combination of country and subject.

The most obvious result is that now the violent subject emerges as the subject containing the highest public interest (Table 2), despite previous expressions against too much violence in the news. This suggests that people underestimate their interest in violence and overestimate their interest in cultural affairs and human interest stories. What does appear to hold, how-

Figure 1

News Value Orientation	Subject	Headline
Conflict	Politics	"Angry Debate Over (country) Legal Reforms"
	Business/Economics	"(Country) Government Attacks Greedy Merchants"
Impact/Affinity	Politics	"(Country) Government Follows U.S. Model"
	Business/Economics	"U.S. Profits as (country) Imports Rise"
Personification	Politics	"A (country) Citizen Ponders Political Future"
	Business/Economics	"Short Food Supply for (country) Housewives"
Straight	Politics	"(Country) Changes National Laws"
	Business/Economics	"(Country) Trade Policy Seeks Self-Sufficiency"
	Violent Crime	"Soldier Shoots Five at Busy Market"
	Human Interest	"Son of (Country) Laborer Wins Honors"
	Sports	"(Country) Basketball Team Sets Out on World Tour"
	Cultural Affairs	"(Country) Minorities Assert Cultural Identities"

Table 1

Interest in Foreign News Subject Area

Subject Area	Too Much News	Right Amount	Not Enough News	No Opinion
Violence	48.8%	38.3	10.0	2.9
Political News	10.5%	57.7	24.4	7.5
Social Problems	11.9%	45.8	39.8	2.5
Economic News	6.5%	54.2	35.3	4.0
Vacation and Travel News	4.0%	63.2	30.3	2.5
Ordinary People	2.5%	50.7	43.8	3.0
Culture and Customs	1.5%	33.8	62.7	2.0

Table 2

Mean Interest Scores for Fictitious Stories

Subject	Mean*	Number of Stories
Violence	3.49	4
Business/Economics	3.08	16
Sports	2.71	4
Cultural Event	2.70	4
Politics	2.61	16
Human Interest	2.40	4
Orientation		
Impact/Affinity	3.39	8
Conflict	2.69	8
Straight	2.67	8
Personification	2.62	8
Country		
Canada	3.01	12
England	2.87	12
Japan	2.87	12
Nigeria	2.59	12

*(where 1 = total non-interest and 5 = maximum interest)

ever, is that the public's interest in economics and disinterest in foreign news about politics is about equal when evaluating the differences between what people say they are interested in and what they actually select as most interesting.

The reversal of interest for violent news, however, is far from total. When we look at the interest levels of the stories categorized according to news orientation, we find that the "conflict" orientation is a very poor second to the impact/affinity news value orientation (Table 2). In other words, people are most interested in the political and economic stories when they are written from the standpoint of the United States [i.e., "U.S. Profits as (country) Imports Rise," "(Country) Government Follows U.S. Model"].

The importance of impact/affinity on reader interest is also apparent by looking at the interest ratings of the four countries (Table 2). As previously mentioned, these four nations were specifically chosen to represent the possible combinations of affinity and eliteness. And, interest in stories about England and Japan, the two elite nations, was higher than one non-elite nation (Nigeria) but lower than another non-elite nation (Canada). This suggests that eliteness, or status, may not be as important as familiarity in determining reader interest. (The high Canadian interest, however, could be affected by the proximity of Canada to Syracuse.) Obviously, a wider range of countries needs to be compared on the relative importance of elite nations and familiar nations, but the findings here are suggestive.

Since Canada received the highest interest score among any country, impact/affinity received the highest interest score among the orientations, and the business/economic subject received a higher interest rating than the subject of politics, we might reasonably expect to find that the Canadian business story with the impact/affinity orientation would receive the highest interest score among all other possible country-subject-orientation combinations. This additive idea, however, didn't quite hold true. This particular story received the second highest score, just slightly below a similar story about Japan which fits the same subject-orientation pattern. The data do show, on the other hand, that all subject-nation combinations received their highest interest scores with the impact/affinity orientation.

Up to this point we have been assessing the public's interest in foreign news and found that what people say they are interested in is not always the same as what they select as most interesting, specifically in terms of violent subject matter. This finding was tempered by the discovery that when news stories are categorized according to orientation instead of subject, the conflict orientation was considered less interesting by the respondents than the orientation of affinity/import. The importance of affinity was also uncovered when evaluating interest in different types of countries.

Conclusions

Understanding the public's interest in foreign news is no simple matter. However, this study does more than elucidate the complexities of reader interest. The findings reported here suggest that in the selection of foreign news, journalistic tendency to emphasize the negative aspects of events, regardless of subject, is not consistent with the public's news interest and foreign news selection. If a journalist wishes to enhance a foreign news item which otherwise might not attract interest, the home country angle should be played on (impact/ affinity) rather than the negative of conflict orientation.

John Hohenberg was right when he suggested foreign journalists need to ask: "How do other people solve their problems? Are they like ours? How can we learn from them? What do they have that will help us? What do they do that is better than we do? Can we use it to help ourselves?"[2]

There also are important implications here beyond the simple choice of news emphasis. Conflict is relatively easy to report and, in fact, it might be this very convenience which has resulted in its prominence in the press. Relevance and affinity, on the other hand, require insight and study. Properly bridging between cultures and nations requires a certain depth of understanding, and careful investigation. It is not always immediately evident how overseas developments relate to or compare to the experience of the home audience. Drawing out valid implications from complex foreign affairs requires close attention and scrutiny, not to mention sufficient training and experience on the part of the reporter. But this study of readers' interests suggests the value of the effort. ■

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[2] Michael Ryan, "News Selection Patterns Among Non White, Urban Slum Residents," *Journalism Quarterly*, 53:3 (Autumn 1976), p. 447.

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